Christianity.

Cambridge Theological Essays. No VI.

"Without this inner subjective revelation of God in human souls, which enables us to recognize the Divine, a historic Christ could never have been known, never have founded a Church; and without the historical Person of Christ the Christian ideal in the hearts of men could never have taken the concrete, commanding, and permanent form needed to found a religion. It would have been, as it was in 'Christianity before Christ', a beautiful dream, or a philosophy no more. As it is, the idea and the fact of revelation have met, and are being acknowledged to have met in the character of Christ as the supreme revelation."

N.B. One might add that this inner subjective revelation was and is capable of development through obedience; or it is possible to be blinded as in the case of the Pharisees, and possibly the "sin against the Spirit."

Wilmer R. Kensinger.

D. Luke Bowser

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Pastor D. Luke Bowser, Jr.

"Christianity". Article by A.E. Garvie in Hastings Enc. of Rel. & Ethics

I. Standpoint of the Discussion.

Tröltsch's insistence upon the religious-historical method as opposed to the dogmatic.

a. Features of this are,

Criticism

1. The origins of Christianity are to be investigated by the same literary criticism and historical methods as applied to any other ancient literature. The assumption of little distinction between fact & fiction

Correlation

2. The scientific categories of causality and evolution are to be applied to religion and Christian life, so as to correlate each fact of belief, morals, worship, or polity with its immediate historical antecedents and to correlate the total reality of the Christian religion at each stage to the previous stages of a progressive revelation.

Comparison

3. Science must observe, compare, class and generalize about all religious phenomena.

4. Objections to this method are,

1. It is not as objective as claimed.
2. It rests on assumptions.
3. It approaches Christianity with bias, and will not listen impartially to the facts.

4. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. There is a peculiarity of religious knowledge.
See chapters 1, 2, 7 of this work.

III. Divergent Tendencies in Christianity.
1. Speculative
2. Sacramentarian
3. Practical
4. Mystical
5. Evangelical

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH THEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH THEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1800-1860

BY

VERNON F. STORR, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD; CANON OF WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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PREFACE

THIS book owes its existence to the generosity of the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford, who made me a Research Fellow of the College, and so gave me opportunity for a few years of quiet study. I should like here to thank them very warmly for all their kindness to me. I have found the subject which I have been investigating so wide that I have been unable in the time at my disposal to do more than complete a survey of the first sixty years of the nineteenth century; but I hope at a later date to write another volume dealing with the theological development from 1860–1900. I trust that I have sufficiently acknowledged in the footnotes my indebtedness to the various writers whom I have consulted. But I desire to express my gratitude to my brother-in-law, Mr. Frank Storr, for reading through the chapters on the Oxford Movement, and for making some valuable criticisms upon them. My uncle, Mr. Reginald Fanshawe, also kindly read through the MSS. of chapters II, VII, and VIII, and I am indebted to him for some suggestions. The book which I have found most useful as a general introduction to the whole subject is the late Principal Tulloch's *Movements of Religious Thought in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century*. The volume is out of print, and is difficult to obtain. It ought to be reprinted without delay.

V. F. S.

WINCHESTER, 1913.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH THEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1800–1860

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

No age can hope to understand its own mind and temper, its purposes and ideals, except through a study of the past from which it has sprung. We of this generation have learned, and are in little danger of forgetting, the lesson of the continuity of history. The growth of a feeling for history has, perhaps, been the most marked characteristic of the intellectual development of the last hundred years. And nowhere is this continuity more apparent than in the story of English theology in the nineteenth century. As we study it, we trace the silent operation of an inevitable law of growth; we follow down the course of a stream whose main current flows steadily in one direction with increasing volume. Past and present are seen to be inextricably intertwined. Nor is this continuity of theology to be found only in the nineteenth century. It extends into the eighteenth; indeed, for there are no breaks anywhere in history, it reaches back to the very origin of Christianity, and beyond. But the connection between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is peculiarly close, for it was in the last quarter of the former period that most of the ideas and tendencies came to birth which were to shape the mind of the century which followed. I have tried in this volume to indicate what these ideas and tendencies were, and to show how a complex problem of theological reconstruction was the legacy which the eighteenth century left to its successor.

Few will be found to deny that a veritable intellectual

revolution has taken place in the last forty or fifty years in England, and that religious thought is being profoundly affected by it. From many sides to-day arises the demand for a revision of theological beliefs. The present century will witness, in fact is already witnessing, a change in our presentation of dogma. Living as we do in the very crisis of the coming movement, it is impossible for us to forecast in detail the form which this reconstruction will take, though we can already see something of the ground-plan of the new building. But this is certain, that only he can hope to play an intelligent part in the reformation of religious beliefs who tries to understand the movements and forces in the past, which by their consilience have brought about the existing state of affairs. It is surely all-important to study the past of English theology at a moment when the future of that theology is in the making.

The present volume is a slight contribution to a vast subject. I hope that its many imperfections may stimulate others to investigate anew the history of our theology in the nineteenth century. There is need that many minds should apply themselves to this study, for we want all the light upon the past which can be obtained. Then the danger will be lessened that in our future reconstruction we shall lose sight of elements in the past which are of real value. If we are to build firmly we must lay our foundations securely, and the foundations of Christian theology are to be found in the past.

A study of the past, again, will enable us to avoid some of the mistakes of an earlier generation. Too often, as we shall see, the attitude of theologians last century was one of blind hostility to changes whose advent nothing could prevent. There were panics and alarms. Unreasoning hatreds and suspicions were fomented. The cry, "the Church in danger," was sufficient to arouse the full fury of unintelligent, ecclesiastical conservatism. But all the while the cause of truth was winning; and to-day we accept without demur much which our grandfathers resisted to the utmost. The lesson for ourselves is plain. From the study of the past we may gain, not only a wider vision, but a surer confidence. *Magna est veritas et praevalebit.* "The Spirit of truth . . . shall guide you into all the truth."

A general survey of English theology in the first sixty years of last century reveals at once certain large features of the development.

(*a*) It was, in the first place, if we except two decades, a period of change, when theological problems attracted attention, and called out a keen interest and activity. From 1800–1820 no new tendencies, it is true, appeared above the surface; theology may not unfairly be described as being then in a stagnant condition. But the decade which followed 1820 saw the birth of three distinct movements, all of which vitally affected the evolution of religious thought. These were, the critical and historical work of the liberal theologians of the early Oriel school; the emergence in Scotland, under the inspiration of Erskine, of a theology which, by its emphasis on experience and the inner witness of the heart, stood in marked contrast to the narrow, dogmatic Calvinism of the Scotch Church; and, finally, the religious idealism of Coleridge, with its appeal to a philosophy more satisfying than utilitarianism, the influence of which can be traced all down the century. The next decade (1830–40) saw the rise, and the initial stages in the decline, of the Oxford Movement. There was activity enough here, and Tractarianism has left a permanent mark upon the English Church; though its power has been felt less in the sphere of thought than in that of practical Church life. Indeed, its theological, as opposed to its ecclesiastical, significance has been greatly over-estimated, and the historian of to-day, looking back upon the movement, is unable to place it in the main line of theological advance. After the collapse of the Oxford Movement came a period of reaction and negation, an hour of darkness in which Maurice so nobly upheld the torch of Christian idealism, and carried on the Coleridgean tradition of a more spiritual philosophy. It was a time in which theology was exposed to many attacks, the most formidable of which came from physical science. Theologians, though they were painfully slow in learning their lesson, were beginning to appreciate the need of reconstruction and of a new apologetic. A leavening process was at work in the general mind during this period. Biblical criticism was steadily advancing; the influence of German thought was extending; the discoveries of science were profoundly modify-

ing men's views of Nature, organic and inorganic. A few prophets, like F. W. Robertson, were trying to show how theology had nothing to fear from the fresh ways of thinking, and how, with infinite gain to the cause of religion, what was vital in the old might be blended with the new. Finally, in 1859 came the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and in 1860 the publication of *Essays and Reviews*. These two volumes marked the climax of the crisis which had been growing. A brief period of storm and unrest followed. But the broader thought had triumphed, and the way was made open for further theological advance. Throughout these sixty years the story of English theology has hardly a dull page.

(*b*) What has just been said by way of summary of the course of theological development makes it clear that the first six decades of the nineteenth century were a time of preparation. But I wish further to emphasize the fact, because in it we see the most characteristic general feature of the period, viewed as a whole. It was in these sixty years, taken in conjunction with the close of the preceding century, that the forces were slowly accumulating which were to revolutionise theology, and to bring about that reconstruction of belief in which we to-day are called on to bear our part.

Speaking broadly, we may say that before 1860 we have the epoch of the pioneer in English theology; and one of the chief interests for the student is to detect the prophets who had insight enough to note the coming changes, and the direction which they would take. Intellectual advance is always achieved through opposition. New views have to contend with the innate conservatism of the human mind, which is never more marked than where theological belief is concerned. The period now under review affords abundant illustration of this law of progress through opposition. Such advance as was made came about only after incessant conflict with the forces of reaction, ignorance, and traditionalism. The key to the situation is not difficult to find. English theology was isolated. On the Continent, and particularly in Germany, an intellectual revolution had already taken place, but the majority of English theologians were utterly ignorant of what had happened abroad, and, what is far worse, did not care to know. They entrenched themselves in their fortress of tradi-

tion, and had the anguish of seeing the outworks carried one by one.

But after 1860 the state of affairs was very different. In the first place, the upheaval became general. Those who had before refused to face the facts were now compelled to do so by the force of circumstances. Public interest was fully aroused; thinking laymen were growing impatient for some modification of the traditional position. *Essays and Reviews* and the *Origin of Species* caused an explosion. Theology could no longer adopt the policy of the ostrich, and hide its head in the sand. In the second place, there was a growing appreciation of the magnitude of the changes which were coming. The problem was not merely one of the literary criticism of the Bible, and of the meaning of inspiration. It was the deeper problem of the reasonableness of a theistic faith, and of an apologetic which could successfully come to terms with the idea of evolution, or meet the negations of a materialistic science. The traditional theology found itself powerless, for it had no religious philosophy worthy of the name. The last forty years of the century saw theologians forced out of their attitude of isolation, and driven to hold commerce with the wider thought around them. Then began that period of rapid progress and enrichment which has ever since characterised theological development.

(*c*) But though 1800–1860 was in the main a time of preparation, all the while progress was being made, and particularly in one direction. Biblical criticism was surely gaining ground, and the traditional theory of plenary inspiration was giving way. This was the inevitable result of the growth of the historical and comparative methods. I have tried to give some account of the rise of the higher criticism both in Germany and in England, and to show how by 1840 the broad lines had been laid down which the study of the Scriptures has since followed. The tenacity with which most theologians in England clung to the traditional views is amazing. But the story of these years is one of the growing triumph of critical methods. So long as the traditional theory obtained, so long was there of necessity a divorce between religious and secular knowledge. At the root of many of the changes which were coming over theology lay a change of view as to the meaning of the inspira-

tion and authority of the Bible. Throughout all this period theology was becoming increasingly historical.

In another direction also advance was being made, the full fruit of which, however, was not seen till after 1860. I have already mentioned the work of Coleridge in introducing English thought to a religious philosophy of a kind very different from the generally accepted teaching of Paley. Julius Hare and Maurice carried on what Coleridge had begun, and helped to prepare the way for the superseding of empiricism by idealism. We shall see in the chapters which deal with this movement how large were its results for theology, and how, by directing attention to those profounder problems concerned with the relation of God to man, it promoted that alliance between theology and philosophy, which was cemented as the century drew to its close.

The demand for dogmatic reconstruction became more pronounced in the last quarter of the century, but there are indications in our period of a movement in the direction of a modification of some of the traditional doctrines of Christianity. We trace, for example, a growing displacement from its central position of the doctrine of the Atonement by that of the Incarnation. There is increasing dissatisfaction, again, with the traditional view of the Atonement, as transactional and substitutionary. Hare, Maurice, Jowett helped to break down the older theory. But the most important name in this connection is McLeod Campbell. His volume, *The Nature of the Atonement*, will hold a permanent place in theology. The doctrine of the Fall, again, was being called in question. Jowett, as we shall see, regarded it as unscriptural; while Maurice is constantly inveighing against those who would make it the basis upon which the scheme of Christian redemption is to be built. The difficulties which thoughtful minds felt about the doctrine were increased tenfold after the biological theory of evolution was accepted, and to-day there is a widespread admission that the doctrine needs a complete restatement. As Biblical criticism grew, it was inevitable that inquiry should be directed to the Creeds. The Creeds are based upon the Bible; the results of historical research into the Scriptures cannot but influence dogmatic theology. But, as I have said, the demand for dogmatic reconstruction did not become general

till toward the end of the century. In the second volume of this work I shall hope to deal with the nature of this demand, and the directions in which it may be met.

(*d*) One supreme problem emerged, as a result of critical and historical inquiry—the problem of the Person of Christ. "The return to Christ" has become a watchword of modern theology. We are to investigate the reasons which have brought this about. The problem was present before historical methods had securely established themselves; it lay at the heart of the speculative Christologies of the great German idealists. In fact, it was their unsatisfactory treatment of the problem which caused a reaction in favour of historical research into the origins of Christianity. In this connection the name of Schleiermacher is of high importance. But the emergence of the problem was assured so soon as the historical sense was awakened, for inquiry into the origins of Christianity brings one face to face with Christ and His claim. The rise of New Testament criticism was largely due to a desire to discover the historical Jesus, and to approach Him through history, instead of through the technical definitions of theology.

(*e*) One other feature of the period may be mentioned. It was an age of tendencies rather than of men. Perhaps it is always so; perhaps the great man is always, in the main, the product of the forces of his time, and the tendency creates its own prophets and witnesses. I do not mean that there were not great men in these sixty years, but there were few giants, as there were very few great theological books. Coleridge and Newman were unquestionably the greatest personalities, but Coleridge was not a professed theologian, and Newman was a somewhat lonely being, the course of whose later life moves outside the Anglican tradition. Maurice, again, was an arresting figure, and Robertson a teacher of the first rank. But the men are dwarfed by the movements. It was essentially a time, to repeat what has already been said, in which large ideas and principles were germinating—a time of the growth of potent, spiritual forces, destined to reshape the whole thought of mankind. The historical and comparative methods, romanticism, idealist philosophy, the achievements of physical science, the growth of democracy, above all, the conception of evolution —here are some of the influences which were to transform

theology. Anyone who will contrast the mind of the eighteenth century with our mind to-day will be in a position to appreciate the vastness of the change which has come about. Do we not win an added interest in our study of the period from this very fact of the predominance of ideas and tendencies? Here is the travail of the Time-Spirit; here is the living God at work. When we see how this revolution in our thought is the result of the convergence of many lines of movement, how inevitable it was, how preparation had been made for it in a long past, we may well rest assured that, though doubtless much of our thought is erroneous, and that at best we can understand only a fragment of the whole, still we are on the right line of advance, and have entered into a heritage which cannot be taken from us.

It may be convenient if I give a brief sketch of the plan of this book. The first three chapters may be regarded as introductory. Since the subject under investigation is "The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century," I have thought it well to say something as to the meaning of the two terms, theology and development, and this I have done in Chapter II. Chapter III deals with the legacy of thought left to the nineteenth century by the eighteenth. The next two chapters treat of the opening years of the nineteenth century, when theology was unprogressive. I have discussed here the theology of the Evangelicals and of the High Church or Orthodox party. In Chapter VI we find the first signs of real movement in the liberalism of the early Oriel school, and of those who shared in its spirit. Chapters VII and VIII I have called "Spiritual Forces of the Century," and in them I have tried to estimate the influence exercised upon nineteenth century thought by the Historical Method, Romanticism, Idealist Philosophy, Physical Science, and the Democratic Movement. The two succeeding chapters give an account of the rise of Biblical criticism in Germany and England up to the year 1840. Chapter XI is entitled "Philosophical Influences in Theology." It was, I felt, impossible to discuss (Chapter XII) the work of Strauss and the Tübingen theologians without attempting some survey of the movements of philosophical thought which culminated in Hegelianism. Schleiermacher

the most important personal influence in the theology of the century, comes in for a brief review in Chapter XIII.

With Chapter XIV we return to English theology. Two chapters are given to the Oxford Movement, and a third (XVI) to Newman's essay on the *Development of Christian Doctrine,* which sprang directly out of the movement, and is one of the most important books of the period. Chapter XVII deals with Coleridge, and is out of place chronologically. But I thought it best to discuss Coleridge in close connection with his disciples Hare and Maurice, of whom the next chapter treats. Tractarianism represents one line of theological movement; the school of Coleridge another, entirely distinct from the former in method and ideal. With Maurice I have grouped Erskine and Carlyle. Chapter XIX contains some account of the Negative Movement which followed on the collapse of Tractarianism, and also a criticism of the prevailing empirical philosophy. Chapter XX is called "Broadening Influences." It gives a short summary of the tendencies which were making in the direction of a more liberal theology, and discusses the influence of Frederick Myers, F. W. Robertson, and McLeod Campbell. The last chapter is concerned with the publication of *Essays and Reviews,* with the judgment of the Judicial Committee upon it, and with the general influence of the volume. The book ends with a short appendix on theology outside the Church of England in the period under review.

A strictly chronological treatment of the subject is impossible, unless one is content to be a mere annalist. My object throughout has been to describe the movements of thought which have influenced theology. I have therefore unhesitatingly sacrificed the chronological order where I thought such sacrifice was demanded in the interests of a clear exposition. I have also, as in the case of Maurice for example, attempted to estimate the work of theologians as a whole, even though they lived on beyond the year 1860. In the second volume it may be necessary to repeat in places what has been said in the first volume when one is dealing with a life which covers parts of both periods. This is one of the disadvantages incident to any historical treatment of the kind here attempted. The disadvantage might conceivably have been lessened if I

had been able to publish both volumes simultaneously; but that I have found impossible.

The critics will quickly discover my sins of commission and omission, which I am willing to believe are numerous. But among the omissions in the volume are some which are deliberate. For example, I have barely touched upon the question of the relation of Church and State, though Coleridge wrote an important essay upon the subject, and though it was a problem which vitally concerned the Tractarians, and was very dear to the heart of Arnold. Again, I have given, and that in a note, only the most meagre summary of the results of Biblical criticism between 1840 and 1860. I was anxious not to overload the volume with details, and I could not find that criticism in those years was doing more than developing results which had been obtained in the earlier period. But the most significant omission is the absence of any treatment of the effect upon doctrinal theology of the idea of evolution. It may be thought that, since the *Origin of Species* was published in 1859, I should have discussed this subject. But I felt that a discussion of this kind belongs more appropriately to the second volume, for it was not till after 1860 that the meaning of evolution came home to the English mind, or that its significance for theology was appreciated. I have, on the other hand, treated at some length of the historical method, which was an outcome of the general conception of development. Darwin gave biological confirmation to an idea which had long been ripening; and I hope I have not neglected this earlier ripening of the idea among philosophers and historians.

The tract of country which I have tried to survey is immense. I trust that I have succeeded in mapping out some of its main roads and general features. I shall be more than content if this volume encourages others to make their own exploration of the district.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

THE most marked feature of the development of theology in the nineteenth century has been the broadening of the scope of the science, which has carried with it as a necessary result the recognition that theological study requires for its successful prosecution the use of various methods. The subdivisions of theology have become more numerous, just because the material from which the theologian draws his conclusions has grown more extensive. This enrichment of theology has perhaps been a continuous process from the first; but at no epoch has it been more manifest than in the nineteenth century, which in its turn looks to the latter half of the eighteenth as the seed-plot of some of its most constructive and fertile ideas. Two factors which compelled theology to define its ideal in wider terms were the dispute over the respective claims of natural and revealed religion, and the rise of the comparative study of religion. The orthodox apologists of the eighteenth century were driven to consider more carefully the meaning of the natural religion which revelation presupposed as its basis. From that the step was an easy one to the comparative investigation of the various forms in which natural religion had clothed itself. And the result of this widened inquiry was that theology could no longer limit itself to the systematisation of revealed truth as it is found in the Bible. It had to take account of religion in all its manifold forms of expression, and to broaden its notion of revelation so as to include non-Christian systems. The sources from which theology derived its material were thus seen to be both numerous and varied. All the channels through which God manifests Himself to men became the necessary object of theological investigation, and theology found itself driven from its former

position of isolation and brought into contact with the historical sciences and with philosophy.

The main purpose of these volumes is to trace out the stages of this progressive enrichment of theology in England in the nineteenth century, and to discuss the various influences which have worked a revolution in the method and outlook of the science. The history of English theology in the last century is the history of the gradual development of a new spirit and broader ideal. It is the story of the gradual conquest and permeation of the old by the new—a conquest achieved, as all spiritual advance is achieved, only in the face of violent opposition. The victory, though not yet finally complete, is assured. The forces of illiberalism and reaction are still indeed operative ; ecclesiasticism still makes its appeal to the principle of authority falsely interpreted. But the deepest currents of life and thought set in an opposite direction. Criticism, science, history, philosophy, all combine, as will be seen, to produce a temper of mind which, while it is historical in the best sense of the word, finds in the past no golden age to be restored as the model for the present, but the material out of which future progress is to be shaped. Theology, while it preserves its own rights, must, if it is not to die of inanition, come to terms with the living thought around it. To a large extent it has already done so, and the result has been nothing but gain. To-day there is a growing feeling that an isolated theology is no living theology at all, and that without frank interchange of thought between the theologian and investigators in all other fields of knowledge theology immediately ceases to be of interest.

We are to study the Development of English Theology. As a preliminary to the historical inquiry, it is well to say something more about the meaning of the two terms. We may begin with Theology—its nature, scope, and method.

Theology, as is obvious, presupposes religion. It is the reflective analysis of the contents of religion with a view to the systematisation and unification of truth relating to God. It is concerned with the subjective religious consciousness, as it expresses itself both inwardly and outwardly, in idea and emotion, in worship, ritual, and institution. But it cannot stop there. It has also to determine the objective basis of religion. It must pass from man to God. It must pass from history to

speculation and metaphysical construction, seeking to make clear the character of the object of worship, to determine the existence and nature of God, and His relation to man. In this constructive work the theologian must take counsel with the historian, the man of science, and particularly with the idealist philosopher. For not only does he require for his final synthesis the contributions to knowledge which they have to make, but he has to effect some reconciliation between his own view of the universe and the view or views of philosophy. Both theology and philosophy aim at discovering the true nature of reality; both seek unity; and both seek it by means of the common instrument of reason. A permanent opposition between the verdicts of the theologian and the philosopher as to the meaning of reality is impossible, for the universe is one rational whole which thought seeks to interpret. Opposition indeed there has been in the past, and still is, between the two disciplines; but we may reasonably hope that it is diminishing, now that it is being recognised that, if philosophy is being called on to listen to the theologian and to take account of his interpretation of religious experience, the theologian is equally called on to listen to philosophy. Theology, therefore, must relate itself to all other knowledge; otherwise it will merely interpret the whole in the light of the part.

We can, then, see clearly the complexity of the subject-matter of theology and the need for the theologian to pursue a variety of method, if he would attain his object. He has to deal with nothing less than religion in all its forms, to determine its essential principle, the nature of the object to which it is directed, and its relation to other fields of human experience.

I may seem by giving to theology this wide interpretation to have abolished the distinction between it and philosophy. The relation between the two is discussed more fully later on in this chapter. But I feel it to be impossible, for two reasons, to define the scope of theological inquiry in any narrower terms. First, the whole intellectual movement of the nineteenth century has had for theology this result: it has forced it out of its earlier isolation, and brought it into connection with an ever-expanding universe of thought around it. Secondly, the limitation of theology to Christian theology, though valid for

certain purposes, is ultimately indefensible. Let us begin by considering this latter point.

Biblical, or Christian, theology is a distinct branch, and, as I think few would deny, the most important branch of general theology. In any theological treatise a separate section will probably always be given to the discussion of peculiarly Christian doctrines. But Christianity cannot satisfactorily be treated apart from other religions. Its very claim to be the universal religion leads us at once to relate it to other faiths, so that we may test wherein it is superior to them. Again, the historical development of Christianity owes not a little to the influence of non-Christian modes of thought. Rooted in a Judaistic past, it took colour from the successive environments in which it found itself, as it developed. Once more, dominated as we are to-day by the thought of development, we study the evolution of religion, and interpret earlier and lower faiths as leading up to the *Christus Consummator*, as prophetic of the more perfect expression of the religious principles found in Christianity. The specific theology of Christianity loses much of its meaning and value if it is not treated in genetic relationship with other religions. Attempts have been made to construct out of the Christian consciousness, taken in isolation, a complete theological metaphysic, which it is then sought to relate to the conclusions reached by general philosophy and the rest of experience, but none of them have been successful. All such attempts start with the tacit, or open, assumption of a dualism between Christian experience and other experience, and this dualism it then becomes impossible to overcome in a final synthesis, except by some highly artificial construction. It is forgotten that at every stage of human development religious experience and other experience interact. Each modifies the other, and only in a natural and growing fusion of both can any true unity either for thought or life be found. Christian theology, then, cannot satisfactorily create its own metaphysic. It must call in the aid of philosophy for the task. A theology which seeks its material only in the revelation contained in the Bible will both fail to understand fully that material itself, and will make the part the standard for interpreting the whole.

How, then, are we to characterise the aim of a living and progressive theology? It is not enough, though it is true,

to say that it will seek for system and unity. The more important problem relates to the nature of the system sought. The system may be an artificial one, something imposed arbitrarily as it were, upon the material in hand, a mere collection of doctrines which do not develop naturally from a common root or principle, and are therefore incapable of growth, or at any rate not easily patient of it. Many of the theological systems of the past have displayed this artificial character. For example, as will be seen later, the theology of Hegel and Strauss and of the Tübingen school, even though the idea of a developing system underlies it, is highly artificial, because Christian doctrine was by them forced into the mould of the Hegelian philosophy. Christian truth and experience were unnaturally intellectualised and interpreted in the light of a purely speculative system. Theology here was overpowered by metaphysic. Again, theologians have often taken as the basis of their construction an existing Christian creed or confession of faith, and have built up on that foundation their system of doctrine, with the result that we have many Christian theologies in place of one comprehensive system proceeding from a fundamental principle, and showing a natural and organic connection of ideas. Or, to take one more illustration, we may point to the immense influence of jurisprudence on theology in the early days of the Latin Church. Theology then took its colour from law, with the result that a legal interpretation of Christian doctrine, and in particular of the doctrine of the Atonement, became the fashion. Nothing but artificiality in theological systematisation could result from such procedure.

Now to-day the wisest amongst the theologians recognise that the supreme object of theology must be the exhibition of the organic unity of all the doctrines and truths of religion. Just as in botany the artificial classification of the Linnæan system has given place to a natural system based on a fundamental differentiation in the life of the seed, and, in addition, the ideal of the botanist has ceased to be mere classification, and has become an ideal of interpretation of plant life in terms of genetic relationship and of the causes of growth; so in theology it is being increasingly felt that the systematisation of religious truth must be nothing arbitrary or mecha-

nical, but must proceed from an adequate interpretation of the vital principle of religion itself. The basal idea of religion must first be found. Then the natural affiliation of doctrine with doctrine must be shown. Finally, all the subordinate branches of theology must be set in organic relationship, one with the other.[1]

The organic point of view increasingly characterises modern thought. It has been forced upon us by the idea of evolution and the historical method. More and more is it influencing theology. I have tried later to describe more fully the nature of this organic outlook. Here I would only refer in passing to a work which, in a limited sphere, yet one which leads us into the very heart of the Christian system, displays what I conceive should be the true temper which should animate the modern theologian. I have in mind the late Dr. Hort's Hulsean Lectures, *The Way, The Truth, and The Life.* Those lectures contain a profound discussion of the meaning of the supremacy of Christ in the world of thought and action. The volume may be described as a commentary upon Christ's words, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." In what sense is Christianity the crown of the long religious development which went before it? And within Christianity itself, what is the significance for life and doctrine of the Person of Christ? A more suggestive treatment of these questions I have nowhere else seen. It is a book which will help anyone who will patiently study it to understand, at any rate in part, what is meant by an organic outlook.

Theology, then, as we have seen, is wider than Christian theology; but the latter provides the fullest expression both of the doctrine of God and of the religious consciousness. All other religions and theologies are illuminated when referred to Christianity. Central in Christianity is the Person of Christ. The systematising of Christian doctrine must proceed from Christ as a centre. He must be shown to be the meeting point of all truth, the fulfiller of the past, and the regulative standard for the future. It is a hopeful sign that theology is feeling its way toward a truer method. One of the needs of the present moment is a better arrangement of the sub-

[1] Cp. article "Theology," in *Encycl. Brit.*, 9th. ed. I have received considerable help from this article in writing this chapter.

divisions of theology, based upon a critical survey of the complex material now available for the theologian. But that can come only gradually; for, by the very necessities of the situation, if the presence of the ideal of a complete theology guides the investigator in his search for proper methods of handling his material, the ideal itself grows and becomes more articulate, as the material to be arranged increases. A progressive theology cannot, except in outline, define beforehand the line of its own advance. Part and whole must react upon each other. Advance can only be gradual and tentative.

If the foregoing is a true account of the scope and aim of theology, two conclusions at once follow. First, theology must be free. There must be a free use of reason in the inquiry; there must be a frank abandonment of the scholastic maxim that reason is but the handmaid of faith. Neither Church nor Bible can be set up as barriers to investigation. That both possess an authority, none will deny; but since it is reason itself which, after critical inquiry, determines them to be authorities, reason has both a right and a duty to subject its determinations to constant revision. Nor can the opposition between faith and reason be pressed to an extreme. A complete synthesis of the two is, doubtless, impossible. Faith would cease to be faith, if such could come about. But there can be no secret mysteries of faith into which reason is forbidden to enter. She must at any rate attempt to understand them. To prohibit her from so doing is to set up a dualism within the oneness of personality, and to confess that the attempt to reach a final unity of thought and experience is fruitless. A theology which aims at being scientific in method must recognise that its only hope of success lies in complete liberty of investigation. The absence of this recognition was the fatal defect in the Oxford Movement.

The second conclusion is that theology cannot progress without speculation. The weakness of a purely speculative theology will become more apparent when we discuss the movement of German idealism from Kant to Hegel. But theologians must beware of a prevalent modern tendency to make theology purely historical. The rise of the historical method and of the historical sciences has enormously enriched theology; indeed, the greater part of the advance which theo-

logy has made in the last century has been due to the growth of a truer feeling for history. But it is only by reflection on the past, and on present experience, that we are anywhere able to go forward; and theology, truly conceived, is the reflective analysis of the religious consciousness, and its object. Christianity is a religion rooted in historical facts. Christian theology, therefore, must always temper its speculation by reference to history; but, as I have tried to show elsewhere, the historical method itself, in its highest form, involves speculation and philosophy. Without speculation how is it possible for theology to compass its task of interpreting the inner principles of religion and determining the nature of God? Or how can it hope to effect any reconciliation between its own unification of experience and the unifications attempted by philosophy?

We have reached a point at which it becomes necessary to say something as to the relation between theology and the philosophy of religion. Can the two inquiries be separated, or does not theology broaden out into the philosophy of religion when viewed in the light of its supreme ideal? It appears to me that the two disciplines ultimately coincide, and that one large result of the movement of thought in the nineteenth century has been to make the coincidence more clear. Such fusion of the two could not, perhaps, have been achieved earlier, because the philosophy of religion, as a distinct inquiry, had hardly come into being until the latter part of the eighteenth century. The philosophy of religion owes its origin to three causes—the recognition on the side of philosophy that religious experience is part of the material with which it has to deal; the recognition by theology that its methods must be based on a free use of reason; and the rise of the comparative study of religion. That combination of factors was not found in its completeness till the close of the eighteenth and the dawning of the nineteenth century. Theology and the philosophy of religion both aim at discovering the true nature of religion, as a subjective consciousness, and as looking outward to an object of reverence and worship. Both derive their material from the same sources, historical and psychological. Both involve philosophical speculation. Some evidence of the ultimate identity of the

two may be found in the change which has of recent years come over religious apologetics. These have assumed a distinctively philosophical colour. The change is largely due to the fact that the advance of evolutionary science has raised doubts as to the truth of the fundamental principles of theism, and thus a defence of theism is necessary before any defence of Christianity can be attempted. But that this is so is proof that theology is increasingly feeling its dependence on all other branches of inquiry, and not least upon the philosophy of religion, and is recognising that it cannot do its own work as a self-contained science, but must hold open commerce with the world of thought outside itself. In this there is nothing to be regretted. On the contrary, it is a matter for sincere congratulation; for it means that the days of mediævalism are for ever vanished, when reason was simply the *ancilla fidei*, and theological speculation busied itself with what too often turned out to be barren logomachies.

Yet the distinction between theology and the philosophy of religion has an important relative value. Thus, while philosophy knows nothing of authority, the theologian, and in particular the Christian theologian, is right, for special purposes, in assuming some authoritative basis from which to start his investigations. The Bible, or the Christian creed as the summary of truth taught in the Bible, may well be taken as a body of authoritative truth. But that authority must be used in a rational manner. It is not an authority above reason, which reason has no right to criticise. The sanctity of a creed is not, as some would have it, the sanctity of a thing taboo. Its title to our reverence consists in the fact that it embodies the traditional, reasoned belief of the historical Christian community. It is not so sacred that it may never be altered, if adequate occasion arises. The authority of the Founder of the Christian religion, though very real, and for the believer invested with the quality of divinity, is not one which can never be critically examined. Christ, though "He spake with authority," never sought to impose truth from without upon the minds of His hearers. The truth was set forth, and then left to commend itself by its own inherent worth and persuasiveness. Finally, the authority of the Bible is one which can be determined only after it has been critically examined.

The immense advance made last century in our knowledge of the Bible is due largely to the illumination which other branches of study have shed upon it. The authority possessed by the Scriptures to-day is stronger than before, because it is more reasonably conceived; but criticism has helped them to win this authority, and in consequence they can never be set above the reach of criticism. But, if these qualifications are kept in mind, the Christian theologian has every right to assume some authoritative truths or principles as the basis of his inquiry; and he will then build up, on the foundation of certain historical facts and of a definite type of spiritual experience, his organic scheme. That scheme, if he would complete his work, he will then have to relate to general theology, showing how Christianity is to be regarded as the crown and complement of the truth concerning God which is to be found in other systems.

From another point of view, again, a distinction may be made between theology and the philosophy of religion. It is hardly possible for the Christian theologian to avoid altogether in his work a practical and educational aim. This is probably true of any theologian, but is particularly true of the Christian, because Christianity is a life as well as a theory. Among the subdivisions of theology are those relating to ethics, institutional religion, and the life and discipline of the community of believers. Christianity is not a pure theory of God; it is a theory which involves a practice. And the Christian contention is that he who would know the doctrine to be true must live it out in his daily life, The presence, however, of a practical aim unquestionably leads to dangers. There will always be the temptation to wrest truth in the interests of some special branch of the Christian society, or some special mode of belief or observance. The philosophy of religion, on the other hand, would cease to deserve the name of philosophy if it were anything but pure theory.

These distinctions, however, between the two inquiries are subordinate and relative. Theology in its widest aspect, and in so far as it uses the methods common to all rational investigation, cannot be distinguished from the philosophy of religion. A final separation between the two can be maintained only if the theologian deliberately narrows the sphere of his investiga-

tions to the study of the tenets of one particular body of believers, or claims the right to make a special use of the principle of authority, thus withdrawing part of the material of which the philosophy of religion has to take account from the survey of the critical reason.

Theology, then, has to admit her need of philosophy. That she has been unwilling to do so is perhaps due to a feeling on the part of the Christian theologian that faith has its rights, and carries with it its own witness to truth in a living spiritual experience; and that such faith is beyond the reach of philosophy, which instead of life offers speculation, and cold reflection upon experience instead of the vital glow of experience itself. Now certainly the philosophy of religion must take account of the specific Christian consciousness and the inner life of faith. That is just part, and a most important part, of the material with which it has to deal; and that concrete experience it can never adequately translate into terms of abstract thought. Yet reflection upon life is part of life itself, and it is only as we turn the eye inward upon our religious experience and strive to disengage its essential principle that we can hope to understand it, or make our faith a reasonable one. And so soon as the theologian, starting from the basis of the Christian consciousness, seeks to build upon it an ordered theology, he will find that at every turn he must call in the aid of philosophy.

The meaning which he attaches to his doctrines, the form in which he presents them, must depend in large measure upon the conclusions reached by science, history, psychology, metaphysics. Thus it is that men are realising so keenly to-day the need of theological reconstruction. The need is forced upon us by the growth of knowledge in all departments; but the reconstruction can never come about, if theology, which itself owes its existence to human reason, distrusts the conclusions of that same reason in other spheres of inquiry. Truth will never be seen in its living, organic unity, if theology refuses to be on speaking terms with philosophy.

Three things, therefore, are required for a progressive theology—the avoidance of an irrational use of the principle of authority; a recognition that theological method must be speculative as well as historical; a continuous reference to the conclusions of general philosophy, with a view to effecting a

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reconciliation between a specifically religious consciousness and all other forms of experience.

Development is the second term which demands some consideration. Our discussion of it here, however, in its application to theology will be very brief, as it is more fully treated later on in the volume.[1] If we take the wide view of the scope of theology defended in the earlier portion of this chapter, it is obvious that theology is always in process of development. Theological truth is continually growing. There is both increase in the materials out of which the theologian forms his system, and growth in the methods which he pursues. It is impossible for a living theology to stand still if knowledge elsewhere is developing. The conception of development, moreover, has given birth to a process of critical reflection upon the meaning of the idea; and theology has thus become interested in its own evolution, and feels the need of a thorough investigation into the laws which govern its advance. No question, then, can be raised as to the applicability of the idea of development to theology in the largest meaning of the term. Differences of opinion, however, arise, when theology is used in the narrower sense of Christian theology; and it becomes extremely important to examine carefully the nature of the dispute.

Two objections are commonly made to the use of the word development in connection with those portions of Christian truth which are contained in the creeds of the Church. It is said, first, that the creeds are not themselves developments of earlier scriptural truth, but are merely summaries of that truth; secondly, that the revelation embodied in the creed having been once given, there can be no further unfolding of it. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken away from it. Let us shortly examine these objections.

With regard to the former it is certainly true, that the creeds look to the Bible for confirmation of their statements. Those who composed the creeds would not for a moment have admitted that they contained anything which was not already stated or clearly implied in Scripture. If the test of a true development is to be found in the emergence of what is new and what was not there before, then it is argued that the creeds

[1] Cp. Chap. xvi.

are not a development of primitive truth. On the other hand, it is asserted that in giving precise dogmatic form to the statements of Scripture, which are, if not altogether undogmatic, yet couched in untechnical language, an addition has been made which may well be called a development. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, is certainly only implied, and not formally enunciated, in the New Testament. This was Hampden's contention in the Bampton Lectures of 1832, as we shall see when we deal with him. He maintained that in the process of translating scriptural statements into scholastic terminology a development, and one which he regretted, had taken place.

This problem of the meaning of development as applied to a theology which starts from the basis of the revelation contained in the New Testament is of great importance in the story of the nineteenth century. It was, as I have said, raised by Hampden. It called forth Newman's famous volume. It underlay the appeal of the Tractarians to the age of the undivided Church. It is the pivot on which turns the Modernist movement in the Church of Rome to-day, and is involved in the whole history of Roman apologetic methods. The significance of the problem grew when the publication of the *Origin of Species* made the category of development dominant in the mind of the century. It is still present with us, and we are the more acutely aware of it, now that the genetic method has become characteristic of historical inquiry into the origins of Christianity and Christian doctrine. The type of question which to-day interests thoughtful minds is this,—What is the relation of the Christ of the Creeds and the Epistles to the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels? What influence upon the development of Christian doctrine was brought to bear by the non-Christian environments in which the new religion found itself?

The second objection to the use of the word development is that the revelation, once given, has been given in its completeness. It is patient of no addition or modification. That is true, but with these qualifications: we must be sure that we are in possession of the original revelation; and we must be ready to admit that, though the revelation is in itself complete, there is much room for development in our understanding of it. Now, how can we be sure that we possess the original

revelation? Only by careful investigation of the sources which embody it; and this is a continuous task incumbent on each succeeding generation. If it is asserted that, because the Christian society has for all these centuries accepted the creeds as a standard of belief, therefore they are beyond criticism, that is a position which no one can accept who values freedom of thought. One age cannot dogmatically impose its creed upon its successor. Each age must test the creed for itself, and must reserve the right to modify it, if the evidence points in that direction. Further, a creed based on the Bible cannot, surely, be uninfluenced by any fresh results which may be reached through criticism of the Bible. Immense as are the weight and authority of the continuous Christian tradition, a blind adherence to that tradition cannot, if faith is to remain living, be substituted for the free, reasonable inquiry which is incumbent on each generation.

CHAPTER III

THE LEGACY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Writers of a generation earlier than our own were accustomed to treat the eighteenth century with scant respect. They called it prosaic and uninteresting, and were glad to pass it by with the briefest of notice. The chief offenders in this respect, as Mark Pattison points out in *Essays and Reviews*, were the ecclesiastical historians, who regarded the century as an unimportant, though regrettable, interlude in the story of the Church. For them the Oxford Movement was the true successor of the seventeenth century. What lay between was a period when the tide of Church life was at its lowest ebb, a period of Erastianism in ecclesiastical politics, and of an uninspiring latitudinarianism in theology. It witnessed, indeed, the Evangelical revival: but a staunch Churchman was not called on to pay much attention to a movement so deeply tainted with the spirit of Methodism.

To-day we think differently. We have learned the lesson of the living continuity of all history. Even the most violent reaction of one age upon its predecessor is a form of the obedience which all ages owe to those which have gone before them. And more often, what seems to be a sudden reaction is in reality only the maturing of ideas which had been slowly ripening in the past. The eighteenth century has for the student of the nineteenth an absorbing interest. The striking contrast in intellectual outlook between the epochs sets him at once upon the task of discovering in the earlier period the beginnings of those tendencies which came to completion in the later. And his search is abundantly rewarded. He finds that the eighteenth century is the seed-plot of many of the ideas and movements which give life and colour to the hundred years that follow.

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate in brief outline,

and chiefly as it affects theology, the nature of the intellectual legacy left by the eighteenth century. This may be described, in anticipation, as a problem of comprehensive reconstruction, social, economic, philosophical, theological. For that reconstruction many of the materials were already available in England at the opening of the nineteenth century. France contributed some of them: more were at hand, owing to the breakdown of the traditional English ways of thinking and the rise of new social and intellectual needs. The contribution of Germany to the work of rebuilding was of primary importance; but German influence was not felt to any considerable extent in this island until some decades of the nineteenth century had passed. Of this influence an account is given later in the volume. Here we are concerned mainly with the legacy left by English thinkers and movements of English national life.

The intellectual characteristics of an epoch cannot be summarised in a word. Yet the one word "unhistorical" describes, more fully than any other, the mental outlook of the eighteenth century. Just what we possess, it lacked—the sense of growth, development, continuity. The historical method, which on the Continent was in its infancy, had in England not yet been born, though we shall see how in the latter part of the century men were feeling their way toward it. But they had neither the knowledge nor the insight which can alone make a study of history fruitful. The prevalent mode of thought was static and abstract. The earlier half of the century was a period of keen, speculative activity both in theology and philosophy. Reason was proud of its powers, and confident in its ability to solve the deepest problems. Yet the problems which it deemed itself to have solved were not the really deep ones. When these profounder issues gradually emerged into prominence, the inadequacy of the professed solutions became apparent. And for the time speculation was paralysed. A period of stagnation overtook theology and philosophy in the latter half of the century. Reason had done its best, and that best was obviously insufficient. Men turned to politics rather than to speculation on matters of high, spiritual import. They had to learn the lesson that reason means more than the logical understanding, and that by the roads of logical demonstration or abstract generalisation little progress could be made toward

solving the concrete problems of life and history. A further proof of the shallowness, or, as it is perhaps fairer to say, the essential limitations of the eighteenth century mind is to be seen in the almost unquestioning acceptance of certain assumptions by both sides in a dispute. Some common ground, indeed, there must always be if we are to argue at all; but the characteristic feature of the speculation of the eighteenth century is that the rival disputants started from assumptions which deeper historical study has plainly shown to be untenable.[1] What was axiomatic for the men of that time is, as we shall see, in many cases simply untrue for ourselves. This is why we are justified in describing the change which came about in the nineteenth century as nothing less than revolutionary.

Again, the eighteenth century was the period of the predominance of the peculiarly English mind. That mind has still its special characteristics; they are seen, most markedly perhaps, in our literary and political activities. But in science and philosophy there is to-day, at any rate as far as Europe is concerned, hardly any such thing as a national mind. The outlook here is international, human. The fresh contribution to knowledge made by the thinker or investigator of any nation immediately becomes the common property of all. But England in the eighteenth century was insular in the whole range of its thought, and all its thinking was stamped with that love of compromise which has always been characteristic of Englishmen. It was the presence of this spirit of compromise and of the common assumptions already mentioned which makes so many of the controversies of the century, especially the theological controversies, appear to us to-day, if not insincere, at least superficial, though they were waged at the time with great keenness. England, in this respect, affords a striking contrast with France and Germany. In all three countries a far-reaching transformation of opinion was in progress as the old century passed away and the new began to dawn; but in each case the method of the change differed, and produced different results. In Germany philosophy, and a philosophy which showed a

[1] This is brought out by Sir Leslie Stephen in his *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging my debt to this work, which must long remain in the front rank of books dealing with the period.

marked continuity of development, led the way; the revolution in thought was essentially philosophical in character. Theology was treated as a branch of philosophy, and the literary revival preserved a close contact with philosophical speculation. The result was twofold. First, the whole movement possessed a consciously conceived unity which was lacking in England. Secondly, German writers sounded the deepest abysses of speculation. Theirs was no intellectual play on the surface. They realised the mystery of existence, and endeavoured to explore it to the utmost. In France compromise was scouted as a thing impossible. The choice was between Catholicism or atheism, between the existing social order or its entire destruction. There was no half-way house. The result was the catastrophe of the Revolution—cataclysm instead of a more gradual emergence of the new from the old. In England, on the contrary, the practical common sense and healthy conservatism of the national mind formed a barrier against the advancing tide of new ideas. From this attitude mixed consequences followed. The State gained; there was no revolution, nor any near approach to it. But speculation lost. Theologians were painfully slow in adopting the new ideas; in fact, they resisted them all through the first half of the nineteenth century, with immense detriment to the cause of truth. And English philosophy (Coleridge is an exception) remained English, clinging to a narrow empiricism, or meeting the sceptical attack of Hume with appeals to common sense, until, but not before 1850, Oxford led the way to a more satisfying creed by the promotion of a study of German idealism.

This unhistorical character of eighteenth century thought, its love of abstractions and logical demonstrations, may be illustrated from many fields of inquiry. In social and political theory, for example, it was the period of the figment of the social contract. Of the nature of this supposed contract various accounts were given, corresponding to the form of government, absolutist, democratic, or constitutionally monarchical, which the writer wished to uphold. But there was a general agreement that the contract represented a true, historical occurrence, and the belief in its historicity survived far into the century, despite criticisms upon it, such as those offered by Hume. Closely connected with this belief was the appeal to the

"inalienable rights of man," or to the "law of nature," or, again, to the "nature of man," which was conceived as a static and fixed entity, the properties of which could be determined by abstraction from all national or individual peculiarities. Social and political speculation tended to model itself on the metaphysical methods of the Cartesian philosophy, which in their turn were based on mathematics as the pattern of a demonstrative science. A study of history and of social conditions in their evolution can alone provide a firm foundation for political theory. When this is absent, legal fictions flourish and controversy is up in the air.

The same tendency again is seen in the contemporary writings of political economists. Here the main defect was the absence of any sufficient appreciation of the complexity of the forces which shape the economic life of a nation, and the result was that speculation was governed by a false simplification. For example, what is known as the mercantile theory long held the field, according to which the test of a nation's wealth is to be found in the amount of hard cash contained in its coffers. The aim of the economist was to reduce the facts of industrial life to logical order by the help of certain formulæ. His mistake was that he over-emphasized the importance of being logical, and adopted formulæ which were too simple for the intricacies of the situation. The publication of *The Wealth of Nations* marked the beginning of a complete change in economic science. Adam Smith substituted inductive inquiry for *a priori* reasoning, and led the way in showing that a careful study of sociological conditions was necessary if any real advance was to be made in political economy.[1]

Literature also showed the influence of the age of reason. Pope represents faithfully the prevailing spirit of the time. Reason was to be supreme in poetry as in theology. The free play of the imagination was checked on every side by rules and regulations. It was the age of classicalism, but of classicalism as construed by French standards of interpretation. Poetic diction was formal. Construction had to follow the prescribed paths. Literature of course, would cease to exist if no scope was allowed to the emotions. Emotion there was, but it expressed itself in conventional symbols, and in the personifica-

[1] Sir Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. chap. xi. sect. ii. (3rd. ed.)

tion of abstract qualities. The didactic and argumentative note prevailed throughout the poetry of the time.[1] It was as if the spring of feeling, which should be allowed to flow freely over the soil around it, had been confined by a kerb, roofed over, and effectually prevented from reflecting the beauty of the changing skies.

Mention has already been made of the influence of the Cartesian philosophy. Just as the roots of the nineteenth century are to be found in the eighteenth, so the latter long felt the influence of the seventeenth. The philosophy of Descartes was inspired by a desire to extend mathematical methods to metaphysical speculation. Proof was to follow the road of logical demonstration. The first requisite was clearness of idea, such clearness as the thinker deemed was equivalent to self-evidence. Find the self-evident principles which lie at the basis of all knowledge, and from them you will be able to build up your world of logically ordered thought. Authority was to be discarded as a principle of reasoning. Descartes begins by doubting everything, and prosecutes his scepticism up to the point where he finds a truth, the truth of his own existence as a thinking being, to deny which is to commit an act of intellectual suicide. A supreme confidence in the power of reason to accomplish the task set before it characterises Descartes and his school. They never question the ability of the human mind to create an intellectual system which shall faithfully reflect the structure of ultimate reality.

The influence of Descartes upon English speculation in the eighteenth century may be seen in the following directions. There is the same buoyant confidence in the power of reason. There is the same reaching out after the mathematical ideal of clarity of idea, and logical demonstration following from principles judged to be self-evident. There is the same revolt from authority; only in England, so far as theology is concerned, the revolt is tempered by a general acceptance of the traditional beliefs. What the English *a priori* theologian wished to do was to build up, by the help of reason alone, a theology which should be independent of revelation. Clarke, for example, is typical of this mode of speculation. In his *Boyle Lectures* (1704–5) he adopts throughout the *a priori*

[1] Sir Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. chap. xii. sect. iii.

method, demonstrating the existence and character of God and the truth of revealed religion in a closely connected series of logical arguments. His object is to construct a train of reasoning so compact that no flaw could possibly be found in it. Take, again, the intellectual group of moral philosophers, Clarke, Wollaston, Price, with their talk of the immutable law of nature, and their attempt to ground morality on eternal necessities in the scheme of existence. Here we have the same static outlook, the same absence of any true historical appreciation. The facts of ethical life are to be squared to the rule of geometry. Cartesianism, however, though its influence was considerable in the earlier half of the century never obtained complete mastery of the English mind, and the hollowness of its pretensions was quickly exposed. Locke began the attack upon it at the end of the seventeenth century in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding;* Berkeley continued it; while Hume, pressing the onslaught with a pitiless, logical consistency, demolished not only Cartesianism, but the whole of Locke's system as well, and left men face to face with an unrelieved scepticism. We need not here trace out the story. What is important, however, is to see how this reaction against the Cartesian system affected English speculation, and led the way to a more fruitful reconstruction later on.

The criticism of Cartesianism, which Locke began by his attack on innate ideas, took generally the form of an appeal to experience. Abstract speculation was to be abandoned, and its place was to be taken by a study of facts and a psychological investigation into the origin and growth of knowledge and experience in the human mind. But in attacking Descartes, Locke was all the while unconsciously ruled by him. He accepted without criticism many of the presuppositions of the Cartesian system, and so entered on a path which could lead only to scepticism. He was saved from scepticism himself—first, because he did not see the true tendency of the philosophy which he was inaugurating; secondly, because, along with his appeal to experience, he inconsistently combined a mass of other beliefs largely theological in character. Berkeley's thought, in like manner, has two distinct sides. He continues the attack on Cartesianism, carrying the sceptical process to the further stage of disbelief in the existence of the external,

material universe; but he also suggests a more positive and constructive spiritual philosophy, which contains the promise of a better system. But he, too, is dominated by a strong, theological motive. Hume, on the other hand, is entirely free from theological presuppositions, and has no religious axe to grind. He is animated by the single desire to demonstrate, beyond possibility of cavil, that if you started with Locke's psychological assumptions you could arrive nowhere. You could have knowledge neither of God, nor of the external world, nor of your own self. If Cartesianism hopelessly broke down, English empiricism, as formulated by Locke, was in worse plight. What was required was a new departure in philosophy. Kant effected this, though even Kant failed to shake himself entirely free from the coils of Cartesianism.

What, now, was the cardinal defect in Locke's system? It was an inadequate understanding of the meaning of experience. The appeal to experience, in opposition to the *a priori* speculation of Cartesianism, was right; all philosophy must start from experience and the concrete facts of life. But none of these English thinkers interrogated experience deeply enough, or got beyond the standpoint of the experience of the individual. The deeper interrogation was supplied by Kant, who, instead of asking Locke's question, how knowledge grew up in the mind of the individual, and what was the psychological process of its formation, asked how there could be such a thing as knowledge at all—sought, in a word, to determine what were the ultimate presuppositions which we were compelled to make, if we would explain the existence of a mind which knows, and orders its experience. A solitary thinker here carries out a vast revolution in philosophy, which affected not only the whole theory of knowledge, but the conception of God and of His relation to the world. The abandonment, on the other hand, of the individualism which characterised the thought of the eighteenth century was effected more gradually, and was the work of many minds. It came about through the advance of historical and sociological inquiry, which taught men that the search into the origins of beliefs, customs, institutions, mental habitudes, involved long and patient study, and could be satisfactorily achieved only if the thought of the continuity of historical development, and of the influence upon the indivi-

dual of race and external conditions, was kept steadily in mind.

The tracing out, in the latter half of the century, of this growing appreciation of the historical temper is one of the chief interests of the student of the period. To this we may now turn. It will serve as an introduction to our consideration of the new tendencies which, slowly gathering force in the eighteenth century, were to re-fashion the thought of the succeeding epoch.

(*a*) We may begin with theology, where clear signs of the coming change are to be seen in the fact that, after the middle of the century, metaphysical speculation is abandoned, and its place taken by a study of the external evidences of Christianity. Some reasons for this alteration in the attitude of theologians are given later. Here we merely note the fact. Investigation of the external evidences of a religion based upon the life and doings of a historical Person must, in course of time, lead to inquiry into the method and canons of historical criticism. In this connection the names of Morgan, Middleton, Hume, and Gibbon are of chief importance.

Thomas Morgan was a Christian Deist who wrote at the close of the Deistic controversy, with the aim of reinforcing the arguments of Tindal. His book, *The Moral Philosopher*, the first volume of which was published in 1737, has, as Sir Leslie Stephen points out,[1] this significance, that it attempts to trace the historical process by which the pure religion of nature has been corrupted and overlaid with the inventions of a scheming priesthood. His theory is shallow enough. Priestly love of power is the *deus ex machina* who unties all difficult knots. But, while almost all the writers in the Deistic dispute on both sides left history alone, and were content with logical argumentation, Morgan gives a new turn to the controversy by attempting some historical treatment of the early development of Christianity.

The *Free Enquiry*[2] of Conyers Middleton (1748) is highly important for the two following reasons. It brought the Deistic controversy to a close by definitely raising the question, which

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 166–8.

[2] The full title is *Free Enquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have existed in the Christian Church through several successive Ages.*

neither side had fairly faced,—Why should we believe in the miracles of the Bible, and not in those of a later period? And it suggested that an explanation of the belief in the miraculous might be found, if an investigation was made into the general intellectual conditions of the age in which miracles were recorded as happening. Both the question and the suggested explanation were prompted by Middleton's keener sense of the true meaning of history. We shall see, when we come to treat of the Deistic dispute, that the orthodox opponents of Deism divided history into two parts. The earlier portion was the sphere of revelation. There miracles flourished, and divine activity was of a character so special that it could not be judged by the standard applicable to the later portion. Middleton saw that, if there was to be any scientific treatment of history at all, a belief in the continuity of history was essential. After his day the character of the dispute changed. Its range grew narrower. The problem of miracle became the central problem in the apologetics of the latter half of the century. There slowly came into being what we may call a critique of the supernatural. But Middleton did more than ask the question, Why should we believe in the existence of miracle at one period, and refuse to believe in it at another? He was the first to suggest that genuine, historical study must take account of the influence of conditions in the formation of opinion. The doctrine of evolution has taught us that an organism cannot be explained without reference to its surroundings, that life is the continual adjustment of inner to outer conditions. One of the first objects of the modern historian is to determine the influence of conditions, physical, racial, sociological, intellectual, upon the belief, custom, or national peculiarity which he is examining. But in the middle of the eighteenth century such a method of research was unknown, and to Middleton belongs the honour of having pointed it out.[1]

Hume's sceptical challenge affected every branch of theology, and, in particular, his attack on miracles, which centred round the question of the possibility of substantiating a

[1] Middleton in the *Letter from Rome* describes the many parallels which exist between the religious practices of modern Romanism and those of classical paganism. He may be thus said to have helped on the comparative study of religion.

miracle by testimony, helped still further to concentrate the energies of theologians upon that special problem. His *Natural History of Religion* (1757), however, is what concerns us here. In it he makes a genuine attempt to treat the subject historically—seeking to show how animistic beliefs may give rise to polytheism, while the latter, in turn, develops into theism, because, for one reason or another, one of the many gods is crowned by the worshippers with superior attributes. The defects of Hume's treatment are obvious. He lacks the necessary historical knowledge for an adequate discussion of the subject. His scepticism prevents him doing justice to the real nature of religion; and he writes from the standpoint of individualism, with a very inadequate appreciation of the potency of racial tendencies and general conditions of environment. But the essay marks an advance, and is another indication of the set of the tide.

In Gibbon (1737–1794) we reach a writer in whose hands the historical method has become a more powerful instrument of research. He lacks many of the qualities necessary to a historian, and must be judged, so far as his investigation into the rise and spread of Christianity is concerned, to have failed to have achieved the object which he set himself. He has not satisfactorily accounted for the growth of Christianity. It may not be impossible, but it must certainly be difficult, for an infidel like Gibbon to do justice to the history of the Christian religion. This, at any rate, is clear, that his use of the historical method extended little beyond a masterly treatment of the external factors of the development. But an essential part of the method is the use of a regressive, historical sympathy, and of an imagination which can penetrate to inner motive and appreciate the spiritual atmosphere of a past epoch. It was just this which Gibbon lacked and romanticism supplied. But he understood the externals of history, the influence of conditions, the continuity of the historical process, the need for accumulating facts, before any sound generalisation could be made. It is his great achievement to have shown that history can be treated in a scientific spirit.

(*b*) Some rudimentary beginnings of the historical method may be detected in the moral philosophy of the century. The intellectual school of moralists tried, as we have seen, to apply

to ethics the methods of mathematical and logical demonstration, and to find a basis for morality in the eternal and unalterable necessities of God and nature. But they failed to show how such a creed could be reconciled with the patent fact of variations in moral standards and beliefs. As their ontological speculation became discredited, the ethical theories based upon it were discredited too. Inquiry then began to be directed increasingly to the problem of the nature and origin of the moral faculty. We find, on the one hand, theories of the "moral sense" which tend, on the whole, in the direction of intuitionism, and of a belief in the ultimate and unanalysable character of ethical appreciation. On the other hand, we see the rise of sceptical tendencies, such as those of Mandeville or Hume, both of whom, though in very different ways, regard morality as derivative. But this genetic investigation was hampered by two restrictions. In the first place, the great majority of ethical writers were dominated by theological presuppositions. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Hartley, Adam Smith—we see in all their moral theories the influence, in varying degree, of theological beliefs. And this influence showed itself, in the main, in one direction. It led them all to adopt a theological ethics. Their professed starting-point was a psychological investigation of human nature. But behind their psychological analysis lay the belief that God had made human nature and each faculty in it for certain ends. Accordingly, when they found the supposed end for which a faculty was designed, they pressed their inquiry no further. The faculty was regarded as an ultimate constituent of human nature. The second limitation under which ethical investigation suffered throughout the century was the inability to rise above the standpoint of individualism. The study of morality involves the study of sociology. Inquiry into the origin and growth of moral ideas or the nature of the moral faculty clearly cannot proceed very far without investigation into the influence of historical and social conditions upon the formation of beliefs. But, as we have already said, this was beyond the purview of the eighteenth century English writers. England had no Herder or Lessing. Intuitionist and utilitarian alike suffered from this excess of individualism. In Hartley and Adam Smith, however, are to be found germs of a more

fruitful method. Both of them try to show how the moral sense, as it exists now, may have gradually arisen out of something more elementary. It is worth while very briefly to examine their theories.

Hartley invokes the principle of association to explain the process. He was a materialist in his philosophy. Ideas, he taught, had their origin in sensations, and sensations were caused by "vibratiuncles," or minute vibrations in matter, which, entering the brain, agitate the particles of the medullary substance. The growth of ideas corresponded to the movements of these particles. But a simple idea could be converted into a complex one through association. Here was the mechanism which would explain the origin of the moral sense. He divides pleasures and pains into seven classes. In each class, he tells us, those pleasures are purest which lie nearest to the pleasures of the class above. The mind is gradually drawn upward by the help of association from one class to another, until at last there comes into being the moral sense which represents the sum total of all the lower pleasures, and results from them.[1] Hartley's theory is painfully crude, and he himself in later life abandoned the hypothesis of "vibratiuncles," but it represents one of the earliest attempts to show that what seems ultimate and inexplicable is not really so, but will yield the secret of its growth to patient inquiry.

Adam Smith is dissatisfied with the doctrine of the moral sense, as propounded, for example, by Hutcheson. He too wishes to get behind it, and to show its origin.[2] He does so by an appeal to sympathy. He thinks of each man as having what he calls an "impartial spectator" within the breast, who enables him to judge of his own behaviour from the point of view of others. We sympathise with the verdicts of this

[1] *Observations on Man* (1749), Pt. I. ch. iv. His summary is as follows:—"And thus we may perceive, that all the pleasures and pains of sensation, imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy, and theopathy, as far as they are consistent with one another, with the frame of our natures. and with the course of the world, beget in us a moral sense, and lead us to the love and approbation of virtue, and to the fear, hatred, and abhorrence of vice. This moral sense therefore carries its own authority with it, inasmuch as it is the sum total of all the rest, and the ultimate result from them; and employs the force and authority of the whole nature of man against any particular part of it, that rebels against the determinations and commands of the conscience or moral judgment."

[2] *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

"man within the breast," and our sympathy thus generates within us a power of moral appreciation. But Adam Smith entirely fails to explain why we do, or should, sympathise with the spectator's view rather than with our own. A study of his ethical theory shows that, though he began with the laudable desire to explain the growth of the moral sentiments out of something more elementary, he ends with adopting a theological ethics, and falls back upon the hypothesis of a divinely implanted moral instinct whose working has been so ordered as to produce happiness.

(*c*) In the field of political theory the growing dissatisfaction of thinkers with the doctrine of the social contract indicates the approach of a more historical spirit. It was inevitable that such a doctrine should crumble under the touch of criticism. There was no evidence in its favour. No facts could be produced pointing to the existence of the supposed contract. But it was not only by this negative road that advance was made. Positive influences were at work in the latter half of the century which helped men to a deeper appreciation of the nature of social life, and of the meaning of the historical evolution of a state or nation. The atomistic view of society, which regarded it as being held together by mechanical bonds or legal contract, was superseded by a more organic view, which saw that national life was, in all its phases, a thing of complex growth and long ancestry, the slow creation of a community of interests, ideals, and sentiments. As the century moved towards its close the eyes of Englishmen were turned to France. There they saw revolution threatening, and heard it openly advocated by powerful voices. Rousseau was preaching the doctrine of liberty and equality. "Man is born free; and he is everywhere in chains." He was pleading for a return to the state of nature, and denouncing civilisation as the cause of all the ills of the body politic. The only remedy was to start afresh, to make the breach with the past complete, and on the ruins of the exploded civilisation rebuild a fairer state. England had no desire for a revolution within her own borders; but even in England Priestley was attacking the Established Church, which had always been regarded as the custodian of order and of a sound, national life, while a little later Paine and Godwin gave expression to anarchic sentiments which were hardly dis-

tinguishable from those of the French extremists. French politics and political theorising not only taught Englishmen to value more highly the blessings of their own orderly national existence, but stimulated political thinkers to deeper thought upon the problems connected with the historical development of societies and states.

Two writers, Montesquieu and Burke, contributed more than any others to the formation of this changed outlook. Leslie Stephen speaks of Montesquieu as "the founder of the historical method."[1] In so far as that method can be said to be the creation of any one man, Montesquieu, perhaps, has a claim to the title, though he must share it with Lessing and Herder. Certainly the true, scientific spirit of historical research breathes through the work which he published in 1734 on the ancient Romans, their greatness and decline.[2] We see in it his power of analysis, and his sense of the complexity of the influences which go to make up a nation's life. But the book which more closely affected English thought was the *Esprit des Lois* (1748), which in less than two years passed through twenty-two editions. *Prolem sine matre creatam* are the words which he prefixed to it. The phrase indicates his consciousness that he was heralding a new departure in the study of the subject. The very title *Spirit of Laws* prepares us for what we find in it—a treatment of law in the light of the deeper causes which have made the laws of any nation what they are. Law is no arbitrary or mechanical product. It is born of the whole social and natural conditions, including conditions of climate, amid which a state develops. The influence of these ultimately determines the form which law takes. The book contains also a profound analysis of the forms and principles of government; and a special object of Montesquieu's study is the constitution of the government of England. For this he had a deep admiration, seeing in the balance of its different factors a model for general imitation. To disturb so perfect a mechanism would be an act of criminal folly. Montesquieu thus became the interpreter of the English constitution to Englishmen, who found in his writings a reasoned justification of their instinctive conservatism.

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 187.

[2] *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains.*

This constitution was the idol of Burke's affections, just as Montesquieu was the object of his panegyrics. Burke, however, though at times he shows a tendency blindly to worship the old ways, just because they were old, was not unprepared for the advent of changes in the social and political world. But he was supremely anxious that any change should be made gradually. He preached to his generation the need of that deep insight into political affairs which can divine the true continuity of historical development. For the method of abstract, metaphysical speculation in politics he had a thorough hatred. Experience, he felt, should be the statesman's guide. But experience for Burke meant more than a crude empiricism. It meant a testing of every step in the light of principles derived from the wisdom of the past. In the past there was wisdom, and he was a foolish person who, at the bidding of some wild theorist, would lightly break with it. Probably no one in England in the eighteenth century had a keener appreciation of the organic character of a nation's growth, or of the meaning of continuity in history. Reform, not revolution, was his ideal. Hence his strong hatred of Rousseau, and his terror of the French Revolution. In a fit of flaming passion you might uproot a constitution, but you could put nothing stable in its place. Nations and constitutions are not made, but grow. Nothing, he felt, but bitter disillusionment could await the political dreamers, if they had the opportunity of carrying into effect their revolutionary schemes. Liberty and equality in the mouths of the revolutionaries were empty sounds. The true advance of freedom and progress lay along the path of gradual development.

The growing feeling for history, then, was the first and most important part of the legacy of the eighteenth century. It was left to the next century to deepen the feeling, and to perfect the historical method as an instrument of research, by freeing it from the limitations to which, in the early stages of its use, it was inevitably subject.

But other forces were also at work which pointed to the coming reconstruction. In religion, for example, we have the upheaval caused by the Methodist Movement. What was its significance? Its direct influence upon the theology of the century was slight. Its promoters produced no theological writings of

any importance. They never claimed to be theologians. They were evangelists with a practical aim, and were content to build upon the traditional doctrines. And the hostility with which, for the most part, they were regarded by Churchmen made the orthodox theologian disinclined to learn from them any lesson. Indirectly, however, Methodism had an influence upon the theology of the succeeding century. When the reconstruction came, after the rationalistic methods of the eighteenth century had proved their impotence, it was seen that a wider spiritual vision was needed, if a theology was to grow up, adequate to religious experience. This wider vision Wesley and Whitefield helped to create, and they did so by restoring to the emotions their place in religion. Religion for the average man, and for the uneducated in particular, can never be founded on argument. Its basis must be laid deeper, in an appeal to the heart and the will. But, speaking broadly, we are right in saying that it was just this appeal which was lacking in the teaching of the English clergy at this period. Their sermons, for the most part, were moral essays, or logical demonstrations, and were addressed to the head, not the heart. Christian morality was taught, but its practice was advocated from prudential motives. There was an absence of fire. "Enthusiasm" was a thing to be avoided at all costs. The English Church of the eighteenth century loved above all things a quiet existence.[1]

Wesley saw, and grasped, his opportunity. The population of the country was growing. In the towns were masses of people for whom the Church was an object of no interest whatever. They were growing up without the ministrations of religion. A situation was arising which was fraught with danger for the community. Here was the very soil in which the seeds of atheism and revolution might take root. We may note in passing that, among the causes which may be adduced in explanation of the fact that England avoided a revolution,

[1] Bishop Horsley's primary charge to the diocese of St. David's (1790) is concerned with pointing out the importance of doctrinal preaching. He warns his clergy against preaching mere moral sermons and becoming "apes of Epictetus." If the clergy would pay more attention to doctrine, then "our churches would be thronged; while the moralising Unitarian would be left to read his dull weekly lecture to the walls of his deserted conventicle, and the field-preacher would bellow unregarded to the wilderness."

place must be given to the influence of Methodism in diverting into a religious channel emotions which might otherwise have found expression in political action.[1]

Rationalism, as has been said, was the prevailing temper in theology. Wesley's religious training had been in a very different school. He had learned both from the Moravians and from William Law that religious experience cannot be measured by logic, and that feeling is of the essence of religion. But he did not blindly follow either master. From the Moravians he definitely broke away. And his practical common sense found Law's later mysticism too vague and unsubstantial. He was, like the Evangelicals, a believer in the power of definite doctrinal teaching. There is a theological framework to all his preaching. But his power lay in bringing doctrinal truth home to the heart and conscience. He was a master in rousing religious emotions, though, as is well known, he produced results in this respect which he himself regretted.

Feeling, then, was making its voice heard. The religious revival led the way. It was followed by the literary revival. Here, too, we trace the growth of feeling, and of a reaction against the formalism and conventionalism of literary standards, which was to issue, in England as on the Continent, in the Romantic movement. One of the first symptoms of the change is to be seen in a fresh feeling for nature and her beauty. Descriptions of natural scenery are frequent in Thomson's poetry, but Thomson hardly belongs to the true line of the new interpretation. He is still fettered by the formalism of his age, and, while he finds beauty in nature, fails to penetrate to its spiritual significance. With Cowper the new movement has fairly begun, because he has left formalism behind, and shows us how nature can be a source of pure and simple delight to man. He was, too, the poet of religious emotion, and though he cannot be said to have risen, like Wordsworth, to a religious interpretation of nature, yet he marks a stage in that direction. It was left for Wordsworth to bring out the full, spiritual meaning of natural beauty, to hold up nature as the garment of God, or, rather, to reveal her as spiritual in essence, as a material frame indwelt, and so transfigured, by the life of

[1] Cp. Sir Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 432.

Deity. Along with this revival of a feeling for nature went a feeling for humanity in its natural and simple elements, for the life of the peasant and the homestead, such as we find in the poetry of Burns, or later in that of Wordsworth. It was a protest against artificiality; it was a recognition of the dignity of manhood, and of the worth of the life of simple, natural feeling and honest toil. Here was not only fresh material for poetic treatment, but the way was being opened for that larger vision of the meaning of humanity and human history which has characterised the nineteenth century.

One other feature in the movement may be mentioned; it receives fuller consideration later. A feeling for the past began to show itself. It was to come to maturity, even to over-ripeness, in Romanticism. It was to join hands with the historical method which it was to help to interpret. It was the seed from which sprang, under the touch of Scott's genius, the historical novel. No very serious purpose, perhaps, underlay the beginnings of the process which first took the form of an antiquarianism cultivated as a pastime.[1] But interest in the past, once aroused, quickly spread. And the study of the past helped to destroy that false belief of the eighteenth century in an abstract humanity possessed everywhere of identical qualities. The static view of human nature disappeared. It was seen that men of other times were not Englishmen of the Georgian era, and that for the interpretation of their life and mode of thought a sympathetic imagination was necessary. Both for poetry and for scholarship in all its branches this birth of a feeling for the past had immense results.

Once more, there was all the ferment of ideas and emotions connected with the revolutionary theorising of Rousseau, and its practical issues in the catastrophe which followed in France. Politics in England had been stagnant enough in the earlier half of the century. In the latter half they were an object of absorbing interest. The war with America, the French Revolution, the growth of wealth and population at home, the breakdown of the old theory of the social contract, the spread of revolutionary ideas, and the presence of a strong undercurrent of social unrest—there was enough here to stimulate both the

[1] Sir Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 444.

theorist and the practical statesman. England as a whole rejected the more violent teaching of the revolutionaries, though Godwin and Paine were anarchic forces. The former's advocacy of the complete destruction of the old social order, as a preliminary to the making of a new one, based on the principle of individual liberty, lost in effectiveness, because of his love of dreamy speculation and abstract theorising; but Paine was a power to be reckoned with. He succeeded in touching the masses of the population, as the sale of his writings proves. He kindled their emotions, and drove his appeal home in speech which they could understand. Filled with all the fire of a prophet, he predicted the speedy coming of the age of true democracy, when kings and priests should be no more and reason alone should reign supreme. This was the period in which were born those hopes of human progress and perfectibility which were to leave their mark upon later political theory and practice, and that reaction against governmental interference which issued in the doctrine of *laisser faire*. It was clear that changes were coming; it was not yet clear what form they would take. Time and experience could alone prove that. But a new sentiment was in the air. We may call it the feeling for humanity, for its liberties, its possibilities of growth, for the inherent worth of the individual. Modern democracy had come to the birth.

The closing years of the century, then, saw the co-operation of many factors making for change and reconstruction. And it is the co-operation which is of importance, the more so, as the prophets of the new era were not working in conscious combination. The tendencies of the age were greater than the men who interpreted them. The transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century represents one of the most profound spiritual transformations which human thought has undergone.

If we turn now to examine the theology of the period, we shall find that it reproduces the same intellectual features which we have seen to be characteristic of the century as a whole. Here, as elsewhere, there is a gradual abandonment of the method of abstract speculation and the adoption of a more historical attitude. In the first half of the century theologians are concerned mainly with the internal evidences of Chris-

tianity; in the second half with the external. The first period is one of vigorous, speculative activity; in the second, interest in ultimate problems wanes, and apologists are content with trying to make good their position on points of detail. This decay of speculation is highly significant. When we examine the reasons for it, we find that it was due to the fact that theologians had become conscious of a need for new principles and a new method. By the old *a priori* road they could achieve nothing further, and what they had achieved they were beginning to feel was unsound. Reconstruction was imperatively called for, but that could not be effected in a day. Time was required, in order that the fresh tendencies which were making themselves felt below the surface might gather force.

The theological history of the period is marked by four disputes. They are known as the Trinitarian, the Deistic, the Bangorian, and the Subscription controversies—the first three of which occurred in the earlier half of the century. Of the Bangorian and Subscription controversies there is no need to speak here; they are not vitally connected with the main line of theological development. Nor does the Trinitarian controversy call for more than a brief notice, though it was not unimportant. It was conducted with distinct ability, and on the orthodox side produced in Waterland a champion whose writings will probably always retain a place in the history of English theology. But here again it stands somewhat apart from those interests which the student of the period finds to be most living. Controversy upon the doctrine of the Trinity can, perhaps, never produce any strikingly new developments. There is little room for the accumulation of fresh evidence, and the chief arguments in favour of the doctrine were set forth centuries ago by the earliest Christian thinkers.

The really important dispute of the century is the Deistic controversy; and it is important for these reasons. A study of it leads us into the very heart of eighteenth century theology. It was a brief struggle, but it mirrors the whole theological mind of the time; and though it was brief its results lived on. Theology in the latter half of the century was concerned with problems which came to the front as a result of the earlier dispute. To understand this quarrel is to understand the

temper, methods, and assumptions of eighteenth century theologians. If the quarrel interests few but the student to-day, that is because our general outlook has so profoundly changed. But the beginnings of this change, or, as we should rather say, the reasons which made the change inevitable, are to be found in this controversy.

The fundamental problem of the Deistic dispute was to discover the valid, rational grounds for belief in Christianity, and to decide between the rival claims of reason and revelation. The emergence of this problem was nothing sudden. It had been coming to the front all through the seventeenth century. It underlay the Protestant revolt against the authority of Rome, and the subsequent growth of a number of independent Protestant Churches. What authority could be substituted for that of Rome? "The Bible" was the answer commonly given. But, then, though men might agree in regarding the Bible as an authority, there was this further difficulty that they did not agree in their interpretation of the Bible. And, since the Protestant allowed the right of appeal to private judgment, there was no tribunal to decide between the varying interpretations. A position was thus created which could not endure. It was inevitable that the authority of the Bible should before long be called in question, and the process was hastened by the rise of the higher criticism, the beginnings of which are to be found in Hobbes and Spinoza. Here, in this movement of thought, is one source of the Deistic controversy. Another source is to be found in the widening of men's conception of religion, which was brought about by increased knowledge of the structure of the universe, and of the more distant parts of the earth.[1] Doubts of the following kind began to suggest themselves. Could the claim of Christianity to be the one supreme revelation from God, necessary for the salvation of all men, be sustained? There were vast populations in distant regions of the earth, living happy and useful lives, who had never heard of Christianity. Were they, as the orthodox teaching seemed to suggest, to be condemned to eternal ruin? And could we be perfectly sure, after all, that so small a planet as this earth had been the scene of so stupendous a drama as that postulated by the Christian Churches? As early as 1624 Lord

[1] Cp. Sir Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, vol. i. ch. ii.

Herbert of Cherbury had sketched in his *De veritate*[1] the outlines of a system of natural religion. That there was such a thing seemed to be clear; it was equally clear that it came into some kind of competition with Christianity. The relation between the two must be determined. Was any revelation necessary, if a system of natural religion could be constructed without its aid? Or, if it was necessary, what was its exact function, and what were its limits? Again, what were the beliefs common to all Christians? Could there be discovered, beneath the divisions of Protestantism, a common body of doctrine which looked to revelation as its source, parallel to the common body of beliefs which it was held constituted the essence of natural religion?[2]

The causes, then, of the Deistic controversy are to be found in the general movement of thought in the seventeenth century. Its immediate occasion may be referred to the writings of Locke, who in 1695 published his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. He was led to write the book, he tells us, by doubts as to the true meaning of justifying faith. What was faith; and how much was a man required to believe, if he would be heir of salvation? Locke wished to simplify theology. He finds the essence of Christianity to consist in a belief in Christ as the Messiah, and in the acceptance of the doctrines which Christ taught. Everything else he would sweep away. Thus a simple creed would be presented to the world which all could understand. What now of natural religion? If Christianity could be thus simplified, might we not go one step further and admit that natural religion was enough to secure salvation, and that revelation was superfluous? Locke will not allow this. He argues that Christianity is necessary, partly because it teaches new truth, confirming, for example, our expectation of immortality by the doctrine of the Resurrection, but more parti-

[1] *De Veritate prout distinguitur a revelatione, a verisimili, a possibili et a falso.*

[2] One result of the controversy was to show that the antithesis between natural and revealed religion was ultimately false. As historical investigation advanced, it became clear that there was no one simple body of beliefs which could be called natural religion. Religion, on the contrary, was seen to be a very complex phenomenon, and its intellectual content varied greatly among different peoples. For an excellent discussion of the antithesis see Webb's *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, ch. ii. Cp. also, for a general account of Deism, Pünjer's *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, bk. i. section v.

cularly because it enforces the claims of religion upon men. It offers a religion universal in its scope, and so appeals to all men; and it backs up its appeal by the evidence of miracles, and proffers the divine aid of the Spirit for the guidance of life to all who will accept it.

We have here not only the materials for the dispute which followed, but we see the nature of the weapons with which the controversy was to be waged. Let us analyse a little further Locke's position. He appeals, in the first place, to reason, and believes in its power to discover religious truth. He is not prepared to accept Christianity on authority, but is anxious to test its claims, and is ready to reject whatever in the traditional creed seems irrational, or unsupported by sufficient evidence. But he comes to his inquiry with his mind already made up on two points. First, he believes that a revelation has been given. Secondly, he accepts the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible. His revolt against authority, therefore, is not complete. In his criticism of Christianity he lays great emphasis upon the evidence of miracle. The Christian miracles were performed openly, and are well attested. But there is evidence also of another kind. Christianity in its essence accords with the teaching of human reason. There is no contradiction between reason and revelation. By the free use of reason we reach the same truths which are embodied in the revelation. Yet we cannot, he feels, dispense with the revelation, because religious truth in its Christian form makes an appeal to human nature which reason cannot make, or makes less powerfully. Revelation provides sanctions for conduct, and such sanctions are necessary for the generality of mankind.

For the next half century the controversy followed, in the main, the lines which Locke had laid down. The central point at issue was the need of revelation. Orthodox apologists had to meet the Deist's argument that natural religion was either superior to revealed religion or identical with it in content, though not in mode of presentation. They did so, for the most part, by adducing the utility of the sanctions and motives for right living which Christianity provided. Both sides possessed a buoyant confidence in the power of reason; it was the age, as we have seen, of logical demonstrations. But the orthodox were in this difficulty. If reason was so potent, might not faith

be done away with? The appeal had been made from authority to reason. What if reason should prove destructive of the very revelation it set out to defend, by superseding it, and by showing that it was unnecessary?

The Deistic attack, however, was not limited to the attempt to demonstrate the superiority of natural religion. Many of the Deists criticised the belief in miracles, and in the inspiration of the Bible. Certain portions of the Old Testament were held up to ridicule as unworthy of credence. This critical movement was of the utmost importance, because it led to a weakening of the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and to the discussion, in the latter half of the century, of the place and meaning of the miraculous. Thus the ground of dispute shifted. The question was no longer that of the need of a revelation. It was an evidential problem which came to the front. Had a revelation taken place? If so, what what were its credentials? What reasons have we for believing in miracles? Of what nature was the inspiration of the Bible? In other words, the course of the argument led the apologists to investigate the beliefs which they had started by assuming were true. They began to see that the problems awaiting solution were more profound than they had at first realised.

Our present purpose will be served if we mention some half-dozen of the leading writers in the dispute. In the year following the publication of Locke's volume appeared Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*. The title of the book indicates its object. Locke had insisted that there was no contradiction between reason and revelation, and had claimed for reason the right to judge of revealed truth. Toland pressed the claim of reason still further. He would eliminate all mystery from religion. Theology offered men doctrines cast in the mould of authoritative dogma. Reason, says Toland, discarding the principle of authority altogether, can reach independently the same conclusions. It would seem to follow that there was no need for revelation; though Toland, it is important to notice, does not himself entirely discard supernaturalism. He is prepared to accept a revelation, if its contents can be shown to be in harmony with reason.

Clarke defended the orthodox position. Reference has already been made to his *Boyle Lectures*, in which he attempts,

in the earlier course, to demonstrate, without reference to revelation and by the road of pure speculation, the existence and attributes of God; and, in the later, the truth of revealed religion. He holds an important position in the controversy for the following reasons. He most clearly exhibits the prevailing tendency to trust in the method of abstract speculation, but equally clearly does he show its inevitable failure; and he has to abandon it when he sets out to prove the truth of historical Christianity. As Leslie Stephen points out,[1] the problem which confronted him, in common with all the orthodox apologists of the period, was the reconciliation of a philosophical theology with the Biblical record. By the *a priori* road you might, indeed, reach a metaphysical conception of God, but could you harmonise that with the God revealed to Moses or Elijah? Or how could you combine in one system a Christianity based on miracles and a theism based on logical demonstration? Clarke is important for another reason. He insists, with even more emphasis than Locke, upon the value of Christianity in providing sanctions for conduct. This, as we have already stated, was the common orthodox answer to the denial of a need for revelation. But it implied that the method of a purely speculative demonstration of religious truth was being abandoned. In addition, the use of this argument set the fashion for the theological utilitarianism which was current throughout the rest of the century, and culminated in Paley's famous definition of virtue. Once more, we see in Clarke a prominent feature of the whole dispute, the readiness of the defenders of Christianity to meet their opponents half-way. Clarke, though a Christian, is deeply tinctured with Deism. We may well wonder at the bitterness of the controversy when both parties shared so much common ground. What is less surprising is the rapid decline of interest in the dispute. Neither side could win a decisive victory, though unquestionably the orthodox came out triumphant for the moment, because neither were sufficiently critical of their assumptions.

In 1730 Tindal published his *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. This was, apart from Butler's *Analogy*, probably the most important contribution to the discussion. Tindal argues in favour of an original religion of nature, of which

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 128–9.

revelation was a duplicate.[1] The purpose of Christianity, he says, was to restore and republish natural religion. But the religion of nature consisted of truths imprinted in our common humanity and accessible to all. Many of the doctrines which passed for revealed truth were obviously not of this universal nature. Tindal, therefore, would sweep them away as accretions. He throws down the glove before his opponents. "You argue," he says in effect, "that Christianity is a revealed religion, universal in its scope. How is it, then, that the revelation was made to so small a portion of mankind? You are attempting to prove the reasonableness of revelation, to show that reason and revelation coincide. But the common mind of humanity knows nothing of the majority of your theological dogmas, and, when it does become aware of them, cannot admit that they agree with the verdicts of right reason." He is ready to admit revelation, but only so far as its contents coincide with natural religion. Nor will he allow that miracles are a test of the truth of Christianity. The only legitimate test is reason. He criticises the Old Testament, attacks the story of the Fall, and treats many of the Biblical narratives as being purely legendary.

Christianity as Old as the Creation is the clearest expression of the Deist position. None of the later writers on that side really added anything to Tindal's arguments. But the volume has a further importance, because in two ways it influenced the subsequent development of the controversy. Tindal, as we have seen, allows no test but that of reason, and his application of the test to Christianity resulted in the destruction of much of the traditional theology. How could revelation be defended against this attack? The line taken by some of the apologists, for example by Conybeare and Leland, who answered Tindal, was to throw doubt upon the capacity of human reason. Conybeare, for instance, argues that since the Fall a taint of imperfection has infected reason.[2] A revelation thus becomes necessary to make good the deficiencies of natural reason and of the natural religion based upon it. After Tindal's attack distinct indications appear of this tendency to depreciate

[1] The alternative title of the book is *The Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature.*

[2] Cp. his *Defence of Revealed Religion*, 1732, and Leland's *Answer to Tindal*, 1733.

reason. The controversy went on, but both sides were beginning to feel that, before any attempts at speculative construction were made, there should be a preliminary investigation into the limits of man's reasoning power. And side by side with this movement in theology a philosophical movement was developing which took the same direction and culminated finally in the scepticism of Hume.

Again, Tindal had raised the objection that the revelation had not been made known to all men. The religion of nature, on the other hand, was held to consist of a body of truths so plain that all could discover them. But was it so? The orthodox were quick to point out that reasoning power was very unevenly distributed, and that the doctrines of natural religion were not manifest to all. If there could be this inequality in natural religion, why should not a revelation be equally limited in its operations? But the orthodox retort contained an implicit criticism of one of the fundamental assumptions in the whole dispute. Time alone was needed to make clear its significance, and thus to strike a fatal blow at the intellectual methods of the age. The assumption in question which was common to both parties was that human nature was everywhere the same. You had, on the one hand, an abstract humanity, statically interpreted; and, on the other, an immutable law of nature, to which revelation was a supplement. Tindal's attack led to a questioning of the assumption, and the questioning, once begun, was bound to go forward, until the whole structure built upon this unsound foundation collapsed. The rapid decay of the controversy which followed was due to the growing perception that both sides were arguing about unrealities.

Collins, Woolston, and Middleton remain to be mentioned. In all three the critical note is predominant; they are concerned less with the larger problem of the relation of natural to revealed religion, than with special aspects of the problem. In the *Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713), Collins points out the presence of defects in the Bible. It is not free from contradictions, and an examination of the MSS. of the Scriptures reveals the presence of many various readings. Such defects cannot but raise doubts in the mind. Reason may be able to allay these doubts, but it is clear that the doctrine of plenary inspiration

calls for some criticism. The importance of Collins's second book is greater. In *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1724), he deals with the subject of prophecy. The fulfilment of earlier prophecies he considers to be the strongest evidence for the truth of Christianity. But the apologist has to determine what he means by fulfilment. It is, he argues, absurd to look for a literal fulfilment in all cases. In fact, a critique of prophecy shows that strained methods of interpretation, allegorical or symbolic, must be applied to the Old Testament if its predictions are to be made to fit the facts of Christianity. Such methods he flouts as irrational. The conclusion is, that the strongest bulwark of Christianity gives way before a reasoned criticism. This attack was the opening of a long conflict upon prophecy, which lasted till the end of the century.

Woolston published *Six Discourses on Miracles* between 1727–1730. He rejected all miracles, and made a violent attack in unmeasured language upon the vital doctrines of Christianity. He defeated his own object by his extravagance. But he helped to bring into prominence the problem of the miraculous. The main discussion in the Deistic controversy turned, as we have seen, upon the need of revelation. But there was a deeper question to be answered. What was the place of the supernatural as a whole in the scheme of the universe? This had to be determined before any satisfactory treatment of revelation was possible. In the eighteenth century English theology never probed this problem to the depths: it had no philosophy capable of undertaking the task. But a beginning was made in that direction when apologists took up the subject of miracles.

Of Middleton I have already spoken. His importance can hardly be over-rated. One by one the assumptions which underlay the dispute were being disproved. Middleton completed the process of destruction. In the *Free Enquiry* he points out two things: first, that the current doctrine of Biblical inspiration is untenable; secondly, that the question of miracle admits of a treatment different from any which it had yet received. The key to the right handling of miracle he finds in the principle of the continuity of history. The historian must assume that the past is capable of rational treatment, and that the forces which operate now operated then. Superstitions flourish

in the present, but we can show how they have arisen. May not, he asks, the belief in miracle be a superstition whose source lies in the general intellectual conditions of earlier times? His argument is not, of course, conclusive against miracle; but it shattered the common assumption of the theologian that between sacred and secular history there was an impassable gulf, and prepared the way for the historical method in theology. It was becoming still more clear that the central problem of apologetics was that of the possibility and range of the supernatural.

Deism rapidly died. It was a spent force. Never at any time had it a real chance of succeeding, for that cannot be a religion for the generality of men which appeals to reason alone. The orthodox theology was also over-weighted with rationalism, and, as Wesley saw, was no fount of inspiration for the masses; but at least it preserved the Christian tradition. Christian doctrines were set forth in the creeds of the Church, and had power over men. But the most essential of the doctrines Deism rejected. The Deists differed considerably in their beliefs. Most of them, however, were agreed in repudiating the orthodox Christology, and in denying that the death of Christ was an atonement. They denied, that is, the two doctrines which, as experience has proved, make the strongest appeal to the heart. Deism, in short, was a philosophy, not a religion.

Can it be said that orthodoxy triumphed in the controversy over its rival? The answer is both Yes and No. Deism perished, orthodoxy survived, and must, therefore, by the witness of facts, be adjudged to have won a victory. But it was a Pyrrhic victory; for the half century of dispute left orthodoxy without any philosophic basis for its beliefs, and without any power to make a new constructive effort. The fact that discussion in the second half of the century turned upon the special problems of miracle and prophecy, and, to a less degree, upon the meaning of inspiration, is proof that thought was content to move on a lower intellectual plane. The whole temper of this later period shows an aversion from strenuous speculative effort. The disputants on both sides had been discussing questions which could be answered only by the help of an adequate philosophy. It was just such a philosophy which they lacked. This they gradually came to see, and so abandoned the contest.

I have tried not in any sense to write a history of the Deistic controversy, but to indicate the limits within which it moved, the main assumptions which governed the minds of the disputants, and the reasons why the dispute ended in the paralysis of both parties. The writers mentioned have been mainly Deists. It was they who began the attack, and the development of the attack determined the form taken by the defence. We may conclude our survey of the earlier half of the century by considering briefly some of the leading apologists and their methods.

Law and Butler, of whom I shall speak in a moment, stand somewhat apart from the general movement of the orthodox apologetic. The majority of the apologists rely on two classes of argument. When the problem is one of proving the need of a revelation, they fall back upon the sanctions of Christianity and its power as a regenerating influence.[1] When the difficulty presses of reconciling natural and revealed religion, they either argue, with Clarke, that there is a sphere of God's operation which cannot be completely brought into accord with His ordinary action, and that for His own purposes He acted in the past in a special manner; or they begin to depreciate reason, in order to make room for revelation.[2] When the problem shifts to the question of miracle, they assert that, if you can prove the truth of the central miracle of the Resurrection, the proof of the other miracles follows. Or, with Sherlock,[3] they embark upon an elaborate evidential inquiry as to the trustworthiness of the writers who record the miracles, the likelihood of their having been deceived, and their readiness to die for their opinions, a line of defence of which Paley was later the chief exponent. Such evidential inquiry is as necessary to-day as it was then. But the value of the conclusions reached must depend upon a prior examination into the character of the literary records. And an examination of this kind was not possible in the eighteenth century. The materials for it did not exist, and, in addition, the belief in plenary inspiration held the field. This was one of the assumptions with which the apologist began his work, and it was the source of many of his

[1] This was the line taken by Locke.
[2] Cp. Conybeare and Leland.
[3] Cp. his *Trial of the Witnesses*, 1729.

difficulties, particularly with regard to the Old Testament. It helped him, however, in meeting a certain class of contemporary attacks upon miracles. For, in the absence of any literary or historical criticism of the Bible, the only alternatives were these: either the Biblical writers were conscious deceivers, or they were to be trusted. And it was easy to prove that they were honourable men, whose acts testified to the truth of their convictions. On the other hand, such a defence was useless when the philosophical problem of the supernatural was discussed: nor did it avail against a writer like Middleton, who pointed out that the alternatives in question did not exhaust the possibilities of the situation.

It is curious that there were not more apologists of the type of William Law. That there were not is evidence of the extent to which the spirit of rationalism had permeated theology. In the age of reason religion was regarded as a code of moral rules, promulgated, according to the orthodox, by divine authority, and enforced by supernatural sanctions. The Deist, who wished to disparage revelation, questioned the authority and the sanctions. In place of a revelation from without, he put the inner witness of the natural reason. Both parties, however, were agreed that the work of theology was the discovery of a code suitable for universal acceptance. Law, on the other hand, treated Christianity, not as a system of regulations, but as a spiritual life and energy which could transform human nature.[1] Being a revelation from God, it was impossible, he argued, that our reason could completely reduce it to logical measure and remove all its mystery. We could but humbly accept it, and try to live by it. This is the kernel of his reply to Tindal. Law's influence, however, on his contemporaries was small. They were bent upon measuring heaven by the rule of earth, and only learned by the slow discipline of experience their inability to do so. But Law, though his depreciation of reason was, perhaps, too complete, is a pioneer of that more fruitful apologetic which took shape

[1] Cp. the following from *Christian Perfection*:—"Christianity is not a school for the teaching of moral virtue . . . it is not any number of moral virtues, no partial obedience, no modes of worship, no external acts of adoration, no Articles of Faith, but a new principle of life, an entire change of temper, that makes us true Christians."

later at the hands of Coleridge, and for which, as the century waned, preparation was being made along many converging lines. His answer to Deism was at that time ineffective, just because the orthodox were almost as rationalistic as their opponents.

The greatest name on the orthodox side is Joseph Butler. The *Analogy* (1736) lives on, while most of the writings connected with the controversy have passed into oblivion. One wonders whether the book would have maintained quite the same high position if the sermons at the Rolls Chapel had never been preached. For the moral earnestness and gravity of Butler, which are his most striking characteristics, are best seen in his doctrine of conscience. A grave and serious tone pervades, indeed, the *Analogy*. Butler throughout it emphasizes the solemnity of life as a probation, involving issues which reach out into eternity. The purpose of the book, in fact, is to show that, on a wide view of human nature and human history, tendencies may be seen at work which harmonise with the teaching of revelation. Yet I think it probable that the *Analogy* shines with some rays of glory reflected upon it from the sermons. This at any rate is certain, that its argument presupposes the view of conscience which the sermons unfold. It starts from the postulate that God exists as the moral governor of the universe.

The *Analogy* was the most crushing, as it was the most philosophical, retort made by orthodoxy to Deism. The Deist attacked revelation and defended natural religion. Butler bids him consider more carefully the evidence afforded by natural religion as to the character of God and the method of His government. He shows that, if that evidence is fairly treated, it discloses a God whose action corresponds with the action of God set forth in revelation. The objections which the Deist raised against revelation exist equally in the case of natural religion. Yet the Deist is not driven to scepticism ; on the contrary, he frames and defends his natural theology. Why, asks Butler, should he not, by parity of reasoning, be ready to accept revealed religion ? Butler's question is this : Assuming the existence of God as maker and governor of the world, what can we discover, by induction from the facts before us, as to the character of His rule ? He shows that natural religion

and revelation point in the same direction. They disclose the same God; whatever difficulties there are in the way of coming to any conclusion on the matter press as much on the Deist as they do on the Christian. Butler silences his opponents, and they have no reply to make. The *Analogy* was written with the special object of crushing Deism. It survives because it contains much more than an answer to the Deistic attack. It is an apology conceived on a larger scale than the current apologies of the time. Butler saw the vastness of the problem, and has given us a study in the general method of apologetic which is of permanent value. His doctrine of probability raises the whole question of proof by convergent lines of evidence. His insistence that we can see only a fragment of the whole, and that there is a larger scheme of things of which the story of this earth is only a part, is a perpetual reminder of the limitations which beset human reason, and teaches both sceptic and believer to be cautious in stating their case. His keen desire to be fair, and not to press the evidence for a conclusion beyond its legitimate limit, is a trait in Butler which we shall all do well to imitate. Finally his emphasis upon conscience, his living sense of God as a personal and moral being, places us at the very heart of the argument for theism. His doctrine of conscience will always give him a place amongst English moralists. The ethical argument for God's existence has been variously stated at different times; it remains the strongest argument which the theist can use. To Butler belongs the honour, which he shares with Kant, of making us feel its weight and importance.[1]

Such, then, was the position in the middle of the century. The Deistic controversy was dead. The philosophical movement inaugurated by Locke had been brought to a standstill by the criticism of Hume. No further advance seemed possible. Scepticism appeared to be the only tenable creed, and scepticism was not a creed, but a mere negation. The paralysis infected theology. Theologians abandoned speculation, and turned to the study of external evidences, and in particular of the place of miracle and prophecy in the Christian scheme.

[1] For an interesting general estimate of Butler, cp. W. A. Spooner's *Bishop Butler*, ch. viii.; in *Leaders of Religion* series.

There was little alteration in this state of affairs for the rest of the century. All the while, as we have seen, new tendencies were developing under the surface, but theology was hardly as yet affected by them.

The most prominent theologian of the period was Paley, and he faithfully reflects the general temper of the time. Let us try to make clear his characteristics as a thinker and apologist. The key to his thought is to be found in what we may describe as his mechanical teleology. God, for Paley, is the great artificer who has made the cunningly devised machine of the universe. He made it long ago by His divine fiat, and started it upon its career. But its course was not entirely smooth. Owing to human perversity defects appeared in the working of the machinery, and these God had to remedy by special acts of divine interference which culminated in the advent and mission of Christ. Man, says Paley, has only to study his own nature and the structure of the world, in order to see plainly the marks of design. If he looks at the world, he finds it teeming with contrivances so skilfully constructed that they afford clear proof of divine origination. If he inspects his own constitution, he discovers finger-posts pointing out his road, and can read a warning of the penalties which will follow, should he wander from the path. A crude, anthropomorphic theism, a teleology of special contrivances, and a theological utilitarianism represent Paley's creed. We may say a little more about each.

In the emphasis which he placed upon teleology, Paley was only giving fuller expression to a belief which had dominated theological thought throughout the century. We have already seen how strong was the influence of theology upon ethics, and how the psychological tendency of ethical inquiry in such men, for example, as Butler and Hutcheson, was the result of their belief that God, having made man for certain purposes, had indicated what these purposes were by the marks which He had left in human nature. By introspection of that nature the divine intention could be known. Paley extends his teleological investigation to nature, and primarily to living nature. The pith of his argument is this:—Living nature teems with subtle contrivances and adaptations. Chance could not have brought about the combination of forces required to

produce such a structure as the eye, or the webbed foot of the duck, so admirably suited for swimming, or the nest-building instinct of the bird. Intelligence alone could achieve such results, which are therefore clear proof of design on the part of God. We can give, says Paley, no satisfactory explanation of this mechanism of nature, unless we postulate at some date in the past, which we may make as remote as we will, a creative act which launched into the world ready-made the various species of living things, and endowed them with power to perpetuate their kind.[1]

The doctrine of evolution, and the special theory of the method of evolution known as natural selection, have destroyed Paley's presentation of the teleological argument. Teleology survives, but it is no longer Paley's mechanical teleology of special contrivances. It is something wider—a teleology of the whole cosmic process to which God is related, not in anthropomorphic fashion as a gigantic workman at work on a refractory material outside Himself, but rather as the immanent, controlling principle of the whole development. In Paley's day, however, the theory of evolution was only just appearing above the horizon, and it would be beside the point to censure him for failing to understand facts which were not to be made generally known till more than half a century had passed. It is, however, fair to point out that his reasoning is shallow. He never faces the deeper problems. He was writing, it is true, a popular work; but a work may be popular, and yet show some appreciation of metaphysical difficulties. But Paley seems to be sublimely unconscious of the existence of any such serious objections to his argument as Kant pointed out in his *Critique of Judgment*. The *Natural Theology* has no sound philosophical basis. It is the work of a clever special pleader who knew how to arrange his evidence to the best advantage. It had considerable influence on contemporary and subsequent thought, but it belongs to an epoch whose intellectual fashions have passed away, never to return. One of the legacies of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century was the task of rebuilding theism on surer foundations.

Paley defines virtue as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting

[1] Cp. his *Natural Theology*, 1802.

happiness." Here again he is but carrying on the tradition of theological utilitarianism which had prevailed throughout the century since the failure of the school of intellectual moralists. Clarke had emphasized the importance of the sanctions of Christianity, and had given hell a prominent place in his endeavour to prove to the Deists that there was need of a revelation. But he at least made the attempt to find for morality an independent foundation. Paley unblushingly bases his ethical system upon revelation. He speaks, indeed, of the light of nature as a guide for man, but by the light of nature he means the rules of conduct which God has made known. If you ask him why God has laid down these rules, he answers that He chose to do so. They are the expression of His will, rather than of His nature, and if we do not obey them we shall suffer endless torment. The righteousness of an action depends upon its results, measured in terms of the happiness of ourselves and others. With the exception of Hume and a few other sceptical writers, it may be generally said that in the eighteenth century philosophy was in close alliance with theology. The alliance was shown both in the metaphysical inquiry of the earlier, and the ethical inquiry of the later years. It was left for the nineteenth century to free philosophy in all its branches from this theological dominance. Philosophy ceased to be theological; theology, on the contrary, more and more sought the aid of philosophy.

The *Evidences of Christianity* (1794) introduces us to another side of Paley's work. Central in the book is the treatment of miracle. If the object of Christianity was, as Paley maintains, to enforce by sanctions obedience to God's will, miracles were the divinely authorised means of calling attention to the truth of the new religion. The presence of miracle, argues Paley, proves Christianity to be of divine origin. It was because they saw miracles performed that the first generation of Christians became believers. Miracle was thus the very heart and centre of the revelation. The philosophical problem of the possibility of miracle does not trouble Paley: God can at any minute interfere with the working of the machine which He has made. What he is concerned to show is that we have good historical grounds for accepting the New Testament record of miracles.

In following out this line of proof he does not add much to what earlier apologists who had been dealing with the same question had already said. But he arranges his arguments with great lucidity, puts the salient facts into relief, and so builds up a compact and symmetrical structure. He points out that the Gospel story gives to miracles an important place, and argues that there is no valid reason for discrediting the record. The tradition has come down unchanged through the centuries. It is clear that the original disciples believed that miracles had occurred. Only if you grant this can you explain their enthusiasm and readiness to die for their faith. Is it easier to believe that they were the victims of a great illusion, or that their faith was produced by actual supernatural occurrences?

A modern apology for miracles would, of course, have to consider the same evidential problem which interested Paley. But it would approach it from a standpoint altogether different. In the first place, it would have sounder canons of literary and historical criticism. It would investigate the general background of culture and belief in the primitive Christian community, and would allow for some measure of influence, conscious or unconscious, from this quarter. It would bring to its investigation the results of a century's literary criticism of the Bible. In the second place, we to-day realise that the problem of miracle is ultimately a philosophical problem, and we are not satisfied with Paley's metaphysics. Thirdly, we should certainly not follow Paley in making miracle central in Christianity. Miracle would not now be adduced to prove doctrine or the divinity of Jesus. It would rather be regarded as the natural accompaniment of a Personality judged on other grounds to be divine. In the first five or six decades of the nineteenth century the problem of miracle came to the front, as we shall see later. Theology had to meet two attacks upon the miraculous, one from the side of philosophy, the other from the side of physical science. The apology of Paley was of little use in meeting either, for both raised issues deeper than any with which he concerned himself. Paley served his generation well, but it was a generation which did not make high intellectual demands upon its thinkers.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY EVANGELICALS

As upholders of the vital force of religion, and exponents of its spiritual power, the Evangelicals in the early years of the nineteenth century may be regarded as the strongest influence in the Church. Never at any time numerically were they more than a minority, and they were always looked on with disfavour by the majority of the clergy, who disliked "enthusiasm" in any form. Only very gradually did they win from the episcopate some measure of sympathy and recognition; their chief supporters on the bench being Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London (d. 1809); Henry Ryder, appointed in 1815 to the see of Gloucester; John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester 1828, translated to Canterbury twenty years later; and Charles Richard Sumner, Bishop of Llandaff 1826, and of Winchester 1827. The last decade of the eighteenth century had witnessed the death of many of the leaders among the older generation of Evangelicals, though John Newton and Richard Cecil survived into the first decade of the new century. The three great centres of the party's influence were Cambridge, Clapham, and London. At Cambridge the prominent names were those of Charles Simeon (d. 1836); Isaac Milner, President of Queens' College and Dean of Carlisle, the chief intellectual power in the party (d. 1820); William Farish, Professor of Chemistry (d. 1837); James Scholefield, Regius Professor of Greek (d. 1853); and William Dealtry, till 1813 a Fellow of Trinity, subsequently Rector of Clapham and Archdeacon of Surrey.

The "Clapham sect" looked to William Wilberforce as its leader (d. 1833), and included such men, eminent in their various spheres of life, as Henry Thornton, Lord Teignmouth, Granville Sharp, Zachary Macaulay, James Stephen, and John Venn, who preceded Dealtry as Rector of Clapham.

In London Richard Cecil had charge of St. John's Chapel

in Bedford Row till his death in 1810, when he was succeeded by Daniel Wilson, who in 1824 became Vicar of Islington, and later Bishop of Calcutta. Thomas Hartwell Horne, the author of an *Introduction to the Critical Study of Holy Scripture*, published in 1818, was at Welbeck Chapel. Thomas Scott, the Biblical commentator, was ministering at the Lock Hospital.[1] Other important names are Josiah Pratt, secretary and inspirer of the Church Missionary Society; Basil Woodd, chaplain of the Bentinck Chapel: and Henry Blunt, Rector of St. Luke's, Chelsea.

The fashionable watering-places were also centres of Evangelical influence, as were some of the big towns, such as Liverpool and Manchester: but the party had little foothold in Oxford, save at St. Edmund's Hall, of which Daniel Wilson was assistant tutor in 1804, and Vice-Principal in 1809.[2]

Three more names deserve mention: Hannah More (d. 1833), whose *Cheap Repository Tracts* had a wide and wholesome influence, and whose personal character and devotion to the cause of religion, even at the risk of danger to life and limb, have won universal admiration; Legh Richmond, Vicar, first of Brading in the Isle of Wight, and then of Turvey in Bedfordshire (d. 1828), a man of high culture and the antagonist of Daubeny;[3] and Thomas Gisborne (d. 1846), who was regarded by the party as an intellectual light, and a preacher of considerable power. The *Christian Observer*, first published in 1802, was the official literary organ of the Evangelicals, and had a large circulation.

Three causes contributed to an increase of the party's strength and influence. The Calvinistic controversy gradually died down, and, with the removal of this bone of contention, the members of the party drew together and presented a united

[1] Newman says of Scott that he "made a deeper impression on my mind than any other [writer]," and that to him "(humanly speaking), I almost owe my soul." *Apologia*, p. 5, ed. 1890.

[2] For the attitude of the authorities of Oxford University to Evangelicalism see *A History of the Evangelical Party*, by G. R. Balleine, pp. 124–126.

[3] Richmond, in the *Christian Observer* in 1804, severely criticised Daubeny's *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, and, taking up the cudgels in defence of Overton, whom Daubeny was answering, maintained that the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England taught a moderate Calvinism.

front to the world. The later generation of Evangelicals were more markedly Churchmen than their predecessors had been. While always cultivating friendly relations with Nonconformist Protestant bodies, they definitely abandoned the policy of alliance with dissenters, recognising that loyalty to their own Church was their primary duty. Finally, many of the leading classes in society joined their ranks. This for a time increased their prestige and influence, but herein also undoubtedly lay one cause of their subsequent rapid decline; for a religion which becomes fashionable is inevitably in danger of losing some of its spiritual power.

Our concern, however, is not with the history, but with the theology of the movement. We have to ask,—What were its main doctrines? What are the permanent elements in its theology? In what respects was that theology defective? What changes in it has the course of time brought about?

Newman, in an article in the *British Critic*, published April 1839, charges Protestantism with lacking all internal principles of union, permanence, or consistency. It spells, he says, religious individualism and atomism. It cannot state clearly its views upon any religious doctrine. "It is but an inchoate state or stage of a doctrine, and its final resolution is in rationalism." Kept within limits up to the present by the formularies of the Church, it must now quickly succumb before the more consistent system of the Tractarians. "Then indeed will be the stern encounter, when two real and living principles, simple, entire, and consistent, one in the Church, the other out of it, at length rush upon each other, contending, not for names and words and half views, but for elementary notions and distinctive moral characters."

How far is this criticism true? Newman was writing when Tractarianism was in the full flush of its advance, and the Evangelical movement had distinctly declined. Facts gave support to his view. The history of Protestantism since the Reformation is clear proof that the tendency to break up into sects has been characteristic of the system; while on the Continent Protestant theology has been deeply infected with rationalism. But as applied to Evangelicalism in the Church of England the criticism surely needs considerable modification. Protestants are charged by Newman with inability to state clearly their

views on any religious doctrine.[1] Now, if there was one feature which, more than another, characterised the Evangelical movement, it was definiteness of doctrinal belief. It comes before us on its theological side as a clear-cut scheme of doctrines which men were required to accept as the embodiment of a divine revelation; and its exponents are never tired of insisting that the fruits of practical religion will be found to exist just in proportion to the clarity of the doctrinal belief. The chief point, for example, emphasized by William Wilberforce in his *Practical View*[2] (a book typical of the teaching of the school) is, that the main distinction between real and nominal Christians consists in the fact that the former have, while the latter have not, a clear hold upon what he characterises as the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, such as the corruption of human nature, the efficacy of the Atonement, the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Inadequate conceptions concerning the real nature of Christianity are, he maintains, one of the chief causes of the prevalent decay of religion.[3] The heart, indeed, must be warmed and the will strengthened, but these changes cannot be wrought unless the mind also grasps firmly the truths which make up the body of Christian doctrine. Narrow though Evangelical theology may have been, it is not too much to say, that one of the chief sources of the party's strength lay in the fact that they possessed a clearly defined doctrinal system which they rigidly enforced.

The Evangelicals, however, neglected what are called the "Catholic" features of the Christian system. They laid little stress on the thought of the Church as a visible institution, or

[1] Newman probably had in mind the special doctrine of Justification by Faith, the precise significance of which, it must be admitted, was not always clearly stated by Evangelical theologians. In *Loss and Gain* he makes merry over their confusions on this point. It may be argued, too, that in their views upon the Atonement some of them came perilously near Tritheism. But were there no confusions in the Tractarian writings upon the doctrine of the Real Presence? Can the Eucharistic teaching of the Anglo-Catholic school be said to display everywhere a marked precision and definiteness of theological belief?

[2] The full title is *A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the higher and middle classes in this country contrasted with Real Christianity* (1797). This was probably the most influential book produced by the Evangelical party. It was translated into several foreign languages, and went through many editions.

[3] Cp. especially ch. iv. section 6, and chh. v. and vi.

on the Anglican Church as a branch of the Church Catholic. Questions of external organisation, such as the necessity of episcopacy, were regarded by most of them as of secondary importance.[1] While they were absolutely loyal to the Church of England, to its Liturgy and Articles, they were, unlike their Puritan ancestors, not keenly interested in problems of polity. The bond of doctrine was emphasized, not the bond of fellowship in a visible, ordered, historical society. For that was substituted the wider and vaguer conception of membership in an invisible, spiritual Church. Evangelicalism, therefore, helped in two ways to foster a spirit of individualism in religion. Differences in external polity were regarded as compatible with a more fundamental spiritual unity. It was the deliberate policy of the party to join, whenever they could do so, with Nonconformists, for the promotion through voluntary societies of religious and philanthropic ends.[2] Religion was conceived as something almost entirely subjective, as a right relation of the individual soul to God which was to be brought about, not so much through the aid which the worship and system of an ordered society might provide, as through the free, interior action of the Spirit of God upon the spirit of the individual man. The need for fellowship in religion was met by the formation of voluntary societies for the extension of the divine kingdom upon earth.

In the doctrinal teaching of the Evangelicals, Soteriology occupies the central place. Christ as the crucified Saviour of sinful man is the main theme of almost all their sermons. Here two beliefs are fundamental. The first is the assertion of the depravity of human nature as the ground and occasion of Christ's redemptive work. John Overton, in *The True Churchman Ascertained*, in answer to *The Anti-Calvinist* of Robert Fellowes, writes: "We *can* only teach that every man who is born, considered independent of the grace of God, and in respect to spiritual concerns, is wholly corrupt, utterly impotent, under the wrath of God, and liable to everlasting torments."[3] A

[1] This, however, would not be true of such a man as Charles Simeon, whose churchmanship was well defined, and whose feeling for the discipline and liturgy of the Church was very real.

[2] *E.g.* the committees of the Bible Society and Religious Tract Society contained clergymen of the Church of England and of the Free Churches.

[3] Second edition 1802, p. 157. The book was first published in 1801.

writer like Overton, with distinct Calvinistic leanings, would naturally emphasize the corruption of human nature; but you also find Wilberforce, who was an anti-Calvinist, maintaining that "man is degraded in his nature, and depraved in his faculties, indisposed to good, and disposed to evil, . . . tainted with sin, not slightly and superficially, but radically and to the very core." [1] The perverse dispositions of children are regarded as proof of this. A child must be made first to feel its sinfulness, if it would grow in grace. Isaac Milner speaks of the unconverted as being in a "natural state of alienation from God." [2] All, without exception, insisted upon this article of their creed. Upon all their writings lies the heavy shadow of the Augustinian theology.

But, as the bright complement to this dark picture, stands the cross of Christ, conceived as the ground of God's forgiveness, and the only hope of the sinner. In the matter of the punishment for sin the Evangelicals taught a doctrine of substitution. Christ bore, instead of men, the punishment which sin deserves. The death of Christ was regarded as effecting a change in God's attitude to man. The divine wrath, appeased by the sacrifice on the cross, became the divine favour for all who would accept the proffered salvation. The Atonement had for them far more than a subjective value. It was of objective importance. It was an act of God which had meaning not only for man, but for God Himself in His relation to a sinful humanity.[3] It was the divine remedy for the ruin wrought by sin; the plan devised by God to supplement the original plan of creation, which, owing to human wilfulness and depravity, was in danger of failing of its purpose.

Great importance was attached by the Evangelicals to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the reality of His operation in the human heart. The whole nature of man must co-operate with His working, but the possibility of such co-operation was His gift. By Him repentance is inspired. Conversion, or the radical turning round of the whole man from darkness

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 26, 27, first edition, 1797.

[2] *Sermons*, 1820; vol. i., sermon i. p. 5.

[3] Cp. John Bird Sumner's *The Evidence of Christianity derived from its Nature and Reception*, second edition 1826, ch. ix., where he argues that we are probably part of a larger scheme of things, which may require punishment for sin to be borne by a substitute, if there is to be forgiveness.

to light, implies His activity. Growth in character, and the gradual eradication of sinful tendency, are possible only by His aid. Such repentance and conversion were necessary for all who would be Christ's followers; but conversion, so the more sober-minded taught, was not an instantaneous thing, but "the serious commencement of a work which it requires the vigorous exertions of the whole life to complete."[1]

Justification by Faith was one of the watchwords of the party. "You build for eternity," says Isaac Milner, "on the righteousness of Christ; you renounce for ever, as a foundation of hope, your own righteousness."[2] "Faith," says Overton, "is a cordial belief of God's testimony, and a reliance on His promises."[3] In particular, it is an unquestioning acceptance of the saving power of Christ's death upon the cross. Christ died for me. He did that for me which I could never do myself. He now lives to infuse His life into me. I have only to believe that, and to act upon it, and heaven is open to me. That sums up the essence of the Evangelical creed; a creed which had, and still has, power to redeem and rescue men. Faith is in no way opposed to good works, save where the question is one of the grounds of our acceptance with God. Good works have no merit in themselves to procure salvation, but they are the necessary outcome of a living faith. The tree is known by its fruit. For the unrepentant sinner who neglects Christ's offer of pardon waits the doom of eternal punishment. The Evangelicals universally accepted the doctrine that at death every soul passes into an eternity of weal or woe.

Underlying the whole system, and common to it and almost all other schools of thought in the opening years of the century, was the belief in the Bible as the authoritative word of God. A discussion will be found elsewhere of the current theories of inspiration, and of the gradual growth of Biblical criticism.[4] Suffice it to say here that, just as the Evangelicals have perhaps been the most unwilling to admit the results of modern criticism of the Bible, so they were the most unquestioning in their acceptance of the truth of the Biblical narrative in its literal meaning. For them the

[1] Overton, *The True Churchman*, p. 163.
[2] *Sermons*, vol. i., sermon vi. p. 207.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 280. [4] Cp. chh. ix. and x.

Bible was not simply the record of a divine revelation. The very page was sacred. It was not only the word, it was the words of God.

Such, in brief outline, was the system of Evangelical theology. What were its defects, and in what directions have we travelled beyond it?

Though the Evangelicals, as we have seen, insisted upon the necessity of a clearly defined dogmatic basis of belief, they were not interested in speculative theology. Spiritual religion was what they taught. They were not theologians; they were religious reformers. Truth for truth's sake, the independent pursuit of truth, was no passion with them. Their passion was for saving souls, and for large schemes of religious and philanthropic enterprise. Doctrine was utilised for this end; and they showed too often a tendency to wrest the meaning of isolated texts or passages in the Bible, so as to make them fit in with their doctrinal scheme. Their writings were in the main homiletical. They produced no great theological work.

A narrowness of interest characterised the party. They were not a party of learning, and, with few exceptions, cared little for church history. Large fields of human endeavour lay beyond their horizon. Art, science, literature, philosophy, with all the contribution to the fullness of human life which these can make, were viewed by them with indifference or hostility.[1] When we make all allowance for the tone of the novels of the day and for the moral standards of cultivated society,[2] and remember that Evangelicalism stood for a crusade of righteous-

[1] It must, however, be remembered that the literary and poetic revival which had begun in the preceding century, and was now in progress in England, owed not a little to the religious revival. The religious awakening, effected in the eighteenth century by Methodism and Evangelicalism, provided a general atmosphere of emotion which formed a stimulus for fresh, creative literary effort. Literature recovered its spontaneity, when the feelings came to their own; and the feelings played a large part in the religious revival. Cowper was an Evangelical poet. It may be true, as recent criticism suggests, that Cowper's religion was based on fear, and that there was a discord in his soul, which he never overcame, between the fierce creed of his spiritual mentor Newton, and his own fresh delight in the simple beauties of Nature; yet the fact remains, that he gave poetic expression to many of the deepest instincts and feelings of the religious life. Mention should be made also of the hymns composed by Cowper and the brothers Wesley.

[2] Cp. on this point Balleine's *A History of the Evangelical Party*, pp. 12–15.

ness, we must still feel that its ethical ideal might have been more rich and varied. The Evangelical pressed to an extreme the opposition between the Church and the World. Christianity must always regard this life as a probation for a life to come; but to endeavour to make all secular pursuits sacred in their degree is a nobler ideal than to rule out most of them as antagonistic to the claims of Christ's kingdom. The Evangelical conception of the relation of this life to the next is fairly summed up in the following words of Isaac Milner: "To be happy in another life; to square all our conduct by that object steadily and primarily kept in view; to attend to the things of this life only as necessary, not as objects of choice . . . these are the grand objects in the religion of Jesus."[1]

The Evangelicals had no philosophy of history or religion. The divine revelation brought by Christ was regarded rather as a sudden interposition of God to save a world from ruin, than as the culmination of an age-long process, by which, in all nations, in differing degrees, God had been making Himself known to men.[2] You could not expect them in an age when the comparative study of religion was in its infancy, and when the thought of development had not come into prominence, to think in terms of growth and process; but they seem to have had no conception of theology as a discipline essentially related to the work of science and philosophy, as a study which, unless it is to perish of starvation, must grow by the assimilation of what is vital and progressive in truth everywhere. It is this absence of any philosophical basis to the system which has rendered so insignificant the contribution of Evangelicalism to the intellectual life of the nineteenth century.

One other feature of Evangelical teaching may be mentioned. The Anglican Church has always claimed to be a society for the education and training of character. Welcoming the new-born life at baptism, she offers it, at every stage of its existence, a nurture suited to its progressive spiritual needs. Can it be said that the Evangelicals paid enough attention to the training of souls? Alexander Knox criticises them as defective in this respect.[3] The soul, once

[1] *Sermons*, vol. ii., sermon xxi. p. 260.

[2] Cp. Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought in Britain in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 13.

[3] Cp. *Remains of Alexander Knox*, vol. i. p. 72, 2nd. ed. 1836.

brought within the kingdom by conversion, was left to find its own way, under the guidance of God, along the road of life. This is an indication of their individualism, and failure to appreciate the value of membership in an organised society. The same defect, though to a considerably less degree, characterised the Puritans. If we were writing *Pilgrim's Progress* to-day, should we make Christian set out on his journey alone?

Contemporary attacks on Evangelicals by their opponents centre mainly round three points—their indifference to the unity and organisation of the Church; their Calvinism; and the extravagances into which some of the more extreme members of the party were betrayed, or the latent tendency to such extravagances supposed to lurk in the system. It is questionable whether the two last charges can fairly be brought against the Evangelicals of the early decades of the nineteenth century. They were, as has already been said, thoroughly loyal to the Church of England and its liturgy, though they extended a hand of welcome to other bodies of Christians. Their Calvinism was of a very moderate type, and, as Bishop Horsley saw, was in no way incompatible with the teaching of the Articles.[1] Some of their leaders, Simeon, Bickersteth, Wilberforce, were in no sense Calvinists, and, unlike many of the earlier generation of Evangelicals, who were nearer to the original Methodist Movement, and so caught more of its spirit, they taught nothing which could be called extravagant or enthusiastic.

It is unnecessary to discuss the Calvinistic controversy, which was, for all practical purposes, dead at the period with which this chapter deals, and has little living interest for us to-day. I have, however, in a note to this chapter,[2] given a brief account of four books which may be taken as representative of the attacks made upon the party. In these, particular criticism is levelled against the supposed Calvinism and "enthusiasm"[3] of the school. Many of the problems which were then burning questions—those, for example, connected with the Predestinarian dispute—have to-day dropped into the background. Those concerned with the outward organisation of the

[1] Cp. *Charge to the Rochester Clergy*, 1800.

[2] Note A.

[3] Cp. Note B at the end of the chapter for the meaning of "enthusiasm."

Church and the significance of the sacraments are still with us, and perhaps always will be. In the period under review they were destined to come almost immediately into marked prominence. But all these old problems—notably, for instance, those arising out of a consideration of the meaning of original sin—would in the twentieth century be approached in a different temper, and from a different point of view. The Calvinistic controversy was waged with great bitterness. Looking back on it, we see how futile much of it was. It dealt with problems, many of which must for ever remain insoluble by human intellects; but it taught the Evangelicals of the following century to avoid "the falsehood of extremes." As a result of all the quarrelling, one principle emerged into clearness—an old principle, but then reaffirmed—the comprehensiveness of the formularies of the Church of England.

Evangelicalism declined when broader and more liberal modes of thought began to make their way, and when the rival movement of Tractarianism brought into prominence truths which had been neglected. Somewhere about the year 1840 Evangelicals began to feel the change, and to modify their position. As we compare the new Evangelicalism with the old, we see at once how great is the interval between them.[1]

In the first place, the growth of Biblical criticism has compelled Evangelicalism to modify its views as to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. The results of such criticism are nothing but a gain to the cause of religious truth, but they constitute a serious stumbling-block to defenders of the old system. The bed-rock of that system was the authority of the written word, the inspiration of the letter of Scripture. That foundation of the Evangelical creed has been destroyed, and can never be relaid. Evangelicals have been compelled to frame a new theory of the authority of the Bible.

Secondly, in all schools of theological thought, Christology rather than Soteriology, the Incarnation rather than the Atonement, now occupies the central position. In place of the *Christus Redemptor* stands the *Christus Consummator*. The teaching of the Evangelical party in the early years of the

[1] An interesting discussion of the contrast will be found in R. W. Dale's *The Old Evangelicalism and the New*. I am indebted to this small volume for some suggestions.

nineteenth century was essentially and almost exclusively soteriological. In the cross of Christ they found the motive power for the saving of souls. Christian experience proves that it is just here that the motive power resides. But when theological thought began to relate itself to the new methods of historical and comparative research, to the discoveries of physical science, and to a philosophy broader than that of English empiricism—when, in a word, it began to learn that, if it would be the queen of sciences, it must take into account all branches of learning, then it became inevitable that a wider view should be taken of the meaning of the Christian revelation. The Atonement was a unique and supreme act of Christ's life; but the life lay behind it, and behind that again the historical preparation for His coming. The perception that revelation is progressive forbids the isolation of any single factor of the movement. It is likely enough that the pendulum has to-day swung too far in the opposite direction; and that the doctrine of the Atonement is not receiving the emphasis which it deserves. There are signs that teachers and preachers are recognising, and are correcting, this defect. But we can never return to the old Evangelical position; unless, indeed, we are content to forget all that we have learned as to the meaning of a historical development.

Thirdly, the doctrine of eternal punishment is, if it is insisted on at all, no longer enforced with the same vigour. Here, again, we may have grown too lax in our views; may be in danger of losing that sense of the heinousness of sin which was so marked a feature of the Evangelical creed, and of minimising the gravity of Christ's words about future retribution. The dread of eternal punishment was utilised by the Evangelicals as a powerful instrument for the conversion of souls. They were but giving practical application to the creed of theological utilitarianism which flourished almost universally throughout the eighteenth century. In this respect we have unquestionably lost a potent motive for the transformation of the sinner. Yet the loss here is a moral gain, for fear of punishment can never be a worthy motive for goodness.

Fourthly, few to-day would follow the Evangelicals in their views as to the total depravity of human nature, and the absolute alienation, apart from divine grace, of man from God;

while there is a general admission that some reconstruction of the traditional doctrine of original sin is necessary. A truer psychology has taught us that much of the perverseness of children, which it was customary to adduce as clear proof of the presence of original sin, is due to the natural desire of a growing nature to express itself freely. The balance between the different elements of its being has not yet been attained in a child. Reason is still the slave of impulse; and impulse is the child's natural endowment, not uninfluenced indeed by heredity, but not wholly, or mainly, evil, and so deserving the wrath of God.

Finally, the individualism of the Evangelicals has broken down. There is more recognition of the corporate life of religion and of the value of membership in a Church. Throughout the whole of last century forces were at work which were undermining the individualism which had been so marked a feature in the thinking of the preceding century. Here, again, a reaction will come. We have gone far in the direction of depersonalising the individual, and losing him in the mass. Whatever may be true of social salvation, it is certain that in the matter of religion "no man can redeem his brother," though he may help to set him on the path of redemption. The religious individualism of the Evangelicals, over-emphasized though it may have been, was rooted in the truth. But the new individualism which will come to the birth can never be the atomism of the older Protestants. It is curious that the strong sense of fellowship which the Evangelicals showed in their splendid missionary and philanthropic work, and their insistence upon family life as the seed-plot of character, should not have been more clearly reflected in their theology.

NOTE A

(1) In 1802 G. F. Nott took as the subject of his Bampton Lectures *Religious Enthusiasm.* The lectures are mainly concerned, it is true, with the teaching of Wesley and Whitefield; but the lecturer is only endeavouring to trace back to its source an evil which he sees flourishing in his own day, both within and without the Church of England. His criticism is, therefore, in part directed against the Evangelicals. His leading points are these. Enthusiasts neglect the doctrine of the unity of the Church which Christ plainly taught, and which has thus

come down to us stamped with the seal of divine authority. Schism is rebellion against God. Nothing but an increase of schism, with all its baneful effects for religious and national life, can result from the doctrine that all who follow Christ, in whatever way, are fulfilling the divine intention. Secondly, the enthusiasts make feeling the basis of religion, rather than duty. Upon the quicksands of feeling no stable structure can ever be built. A religion based on feeling must either rapidly yield before the attack of a reasoned scepticism, or maintain itself by an extravagant individualism which mistakes a heated imagination for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and so is left without any adequate criterion for judging between what is divine and what is human. Thirdly, the source of enthusiasm is either vanity and ambition, or a delusion produced by the vehement action of the imagination. If enthusiasm does not issue in extravagances and aberrations, it destroys the possibility of all mental growth and improvement. Where an extravagant belief in the illumination of the Holy Spirit obtains, there is no room for the slower process of self-education.

(2) The Bampton lecturer in 1812 was Richard Mant, who subsequently became Bishop of Killaloe, in Ireland. In *An Appeal to the Gospel* he sought to rebut the charge brought by Methodists and others, that the Gospel was not preached by the clergy of the National Church, and set out to show that the enthusiasts misunderstood the meaning of the Gospel, and gave a false interpretation to the doctrines of Justification, Election, and Regeneration. Justification, he maintained, takes place at baptism ; it relates to the admission of Christians into favour and covenant with God, and not to their ultimate forgiveness and title to everlasting happiness. The Pauline doctrine of Election does not, he said, refer to the election of individuals. Or, if it does, then it is not an election to eternal life, but to the privilege of the profession of the Gospel. Or if it does relate to election to eternal life, then such election is not absolute and unconditional, but covers only those whom God in His foreknowledge knew would remain true. Again, any form of election, as interpreted by the enthusiasts, carries with it, as its correlative, the hateful doctrine of reprobation. By regeneration is meant the spiritual grace given in baptism. It is to be sharply distinguished from conversion, or renovation. If you deny the efficacy of the one sacrament, you should logically be ready to deny the efficacy of the other.[1] Overton had insisted upon the necessity of conversion for all men without

[1] Lectures six and seven deal with Regeneration and Conversion. They were published later separately by the S.P.C.K. under the title of *Two Tracts on Regeneration and Conversion.*

exception. Mant combats this, but is hardly fair to Overton, who expressly says that he is not speaking of instantaneous conversion.[1] Mant also combats the doctrines, taught by some of the extremists, of the perfectibility of human nature and the inward assurance of salvation.

(3) In 1804 Richard Laurence, Archbishop of Cashel, formerly Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, discussed in his Bampton Lectures the question of the Calvinism of the XXXIX Articles.[2] He showed that the Articles dealing with the Predestinarian controversy, if traced back to their source, are seen to be modelled on Lutheran lines, in opposition to the tenets of the Roman Church. They contain, he said, no trace of the Calvinistic doctrine of the general imputation of Adam's guilt to posterity. Our reformers never asserted that man could not think a good thought, or do a good act, until some predestined moment arrived, when God's grace should move him without any co-operation on his own part. With regard to justification, it was their opposition to the scholastic doctrine of merit which led them to speak of justification by faith alone. They never meant to deny the value of a moral act; but were concerned only to oppose the view, that by good actions man could effect a reconciliation between himself and God. It is contrary to the teaching of the Prayer Book, said the lecturer, to insist that to be justified by faith a man must have within him the consciousness of a saving principle.

(4) The last work of which mention may be made is *A Refutation of Calvinism*, by George Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, published in 1811. The conclusion reached by the author is thus expressed:—"There is not in any part of our Book of Common Prayer, or in our Articles, a single expression, which can fairly be interpreted as asserting or recognising any one of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism."[3] Tomline loathed Calvinism with all his soul, and his loathing led him to strain the meaning of some of the expressions in the Articles, so as to eliminate from them any trace of the moderate Calvinism of which they are unquestionably patient. He is, as far as Calvinism is concerned, a purely partisan writer. In Article IX, *Of Original or Birth-Sin*, Tomline explains that the phrase "very far gone from original righteousness" means not completely gone; and that "of his own nature inclined to evil," means

[1] Cp. *The True Churchman*, pp. 160–163. It is at this point that the question of Regeneration touched Calvinism. The Calvinists said there was no justification unless there was present a conscious sense of pardon and acceptance.

[2] *An Attempt to illustrate those Articles of the Church of England which the Calvinists improperly consider as Calvinistical.*

[3] Cp. p. 385. Eighth edition, 1823.

that he can still do good. He, too, refers regeneration to the immediate effect of baptism, and distinguishes it from repentance, conversion, or any subsequent operation of the Holy Spirit. At baptism, he says, you change "a natural state in Adam for a spiritual state in Christ." The book is a learned one, and ends with a series of patristic quotations against Calvinistic teaching, extracts from Calvin's writings illustrating the nature of his theology, and a historical account of the growth of Calvinistic doctrine.

NOTE B

I know no better account of the meaning of the word "enthusiasm" than that given by Abbey in ch. vii. of *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (Abbey and Overton). The writer points out that the term indicated the presence of certain modes of thought and feeling rather than of practice. It signified in the words of Henry More, which he quotes, "a misconceit of inspiration," and had a wide connotation. "It thus became a sort of byeword, applied in opprobrium and derision to all who laid claim to a spiritual power or divine guidance, such as appeared to the person by whom the term of reproach was used, fanatical extravagance, or, at the least, an unauthorised outstripping of all rightful bounds of reason. Its preciser meaning differed exceedingly with the mind of the speaker and with the opinions to which it was applied. It sometimes denoted the wildest and most credulous fanaticism, or the most visionary mysticism; on the other hand, the irreligious, the lukewarm, and the formalist often levelled the reproach of enthusiasm, equally with that of bigotry, at what ought to have been regarded as sound spirituality and true Christian zeal, the anxious efforts of thoughtful and religious men to find a surer standing ground against the reasonings of infidels and Deists."

The term is a land-mark in the history of eighteenth century thought, both theological and philosophical. It is closely connected, on the one side with the revival of the feelings in the life of religion and the reaction against a narrow rationalism; and on the other with the development of ethical inquiry into the nature of the moral faculty. A careful study of the significance of the word opens up the whole range of the problems which the speculation of the eighteenth century was trying to solve.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLY ORTHODOX

It is probably better to describe the group of men who are the subject of this chapter by the name Orthodox than by the name High Churchmen. The latter suggests at once our modern threefold division of High, Low, Broad; but in the early years of the nineteenth century that division did not exist, for under the title Low Church were included the Latitudinarians, whom we to-day should call Broad.[1] Again, those who a century ago were designated as High Churchmen consisted of two distinct groups. One group was composed of "Church and State" men who were never tired of praising the Establishment, and pointing out the beneficial results which flowed from it; and to these the name High Churchman was especially given. The other group of able and distinguished men dealt with in this chapter, while not despising the connection of Church and State, regarded the Church as in essence a purely spiritual organisation, and independent of the State in all matters relating to doctrine or spiritual authority. Church feeling was far stronger in this group than in the other. It is to them the Oxford Movement looks as its lineal ancestors. Nomenclature is, perhaps, a matter of secondary concern, but there is, I think, a further appropriateness in the title "Orthodox." The very word suggests defence of an accepted creed and position, contentment with a long-established order, and the absence of any desire to innovate. These are precisely the traits which we find to be characteristic of this group. They were the conservative party in theology, preserving in the main the old historic traditions of the High Church divines of the Caroline epoch. But, for the most part, they did not push their doctrinal tenets. They held them firmly and devotedly, and in their controversial writings

[1] This is the position defended by Canon Overton in *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 24.

defended them with vigour against Evangelicals, Methodists, and Roman Catholics, but they did not press the attack or carry the war into the enemy's camp. The theology of the Evangelical was narrow, but the truths which he believed filled his soul, and he was eager to propagate them whenever he could. The theology of the Orthodox was broader and more systematic, but it did not possess him, or turn him into a prophet. The party, as Alexander Knox saw, lacked fire and vitality, and though they were scarcely behind the Evangelicals in good works—in the promotion, for example, of Church societies for missionary and educational effort—in the assertion of their distinctive doctrinal principles they were content rather to act on the defensive. It was the advance of liberalism in politics and theology which stimulated their successors in the next generation to adopt a more aggressive and constructive policy. The Caroline divines had been willing to cultivate friendly relations with the Reformed Churches in Europe. The Orthodox had a stiffer conscience in this matter. They laid great emphasis upon episcopacy, and felt that the Reformation had sundered the unity of the Church. Every form of Nonconformity at home came under the ban of their displeasure, and they disliked the Latitudinarians. They disliked, too, the Evangelicals, partly because of their Calvinistic leanings, partly because they regarded as of minor importance questions of Church unity and organisation. They were content with the Prayer Book as affording a middle position between Romanism on the one side and continental Protestantism on the other. Ritual observance had little interest for them. Their Sacramentalism was, on the whole, sober and restrained.

The High Church party, therefore, was not extinct at this time, as is sometimes erroneously asserted. The Oxford Movement was not so much the resurrection of principles long buried underground, as the corporate assertion, in more vigorous fashion, of teaching which had always found a place among Anglican divines, and was in the early years of the century maintained by the Orthodox group. All the leading doctrines of the Tractarians are to be found in the writings of such men as Van Mildert, Horsley, Daubeny, and Alexander Knox. The change which came about with the Oxford Move-

ment was mainly a change in doctrinal emphasis and spiritual atmosphere. While the whole body of High Church doctrine was enthusiastically taught, a new importance was given by the Tractarians to the two dogmas of the Catholicity of the Church and the Apostolical Succession. These formed the central pivot on which the later movement turned. Feeling and emotion came in also to complete the change. What had been a restrained sentiment of veneration for the Church became a passion of loyal attachment. In the writings of the Orthodox, with the one exception of Knox, there is not much flow of feeling. They were on their guard against it, because they had seen in the enthusiasts the dangers and extravagances to which it might lead.

The Orthodox, like the Evangelicals, were a minority in the Church, though they included among their number the most prominent of the bishops. They were distinctly a party of learning, who kept alive the tradition of a cultured clergy. Why was it that they had not more influence? Firstly, because the bulk of the clergy were indifferent and worldly. Secondly, because, though they held in theory a doctrine of the spiritual independence of the Church, in practice they leaned too much upon the arm of the State. The Establishment was the representative of settled order amid the revolutionary tendencies of the day. For centuries the Church, allied with the State, had been the Church of the nation. In its bosom they had grown up, and they felt unwilling to thrust aside the ideal of a national Church. They were pulled in two directions, and so lost power. Once more, as has been already pointed out, the very circumstances of their time seemed to counsel defensive action. Enthusiasm, on the one hand, and, on the other, latitudinarianism, were foes who must be kept in check. Resistance rather than aggression appeared to be the sounder attitude to adopt.

The Evangelicals were not theologians; the Orthodox were. They were not theologians on a large scale, constructing systems which have an abiding place in the history of Christian doctrine. That was not their object They had inherited a well-tried creed which satisfied them, and they were there to defend it from attack. But in defending it they proved that they had learning and a real theological interest; and if their books

are hardly more read to-day than are the writings of the Evangelicals, that is because the modern mind is interested in a mass of problems which in their time had not appeared above the horizon.

Among the bishops who belonged to the party the three ablest were Van Mildert of Durham (d. 1836), Herbert Marsh of Peterborough (d. 1838), and the veteran Horsley of Rochester (d. 1806), whom Coleridge called "the one red leaf, the last of its class, with relation to the learned teachers of our Church." Others of intellectual eminence were Tomline of Winchester, Kaye of Lincoln, Lloyd of Oxford, Middleton of Calcutta, and, in Ireland, Jebb of Limerick and Richard Mant of Killaloe. A consistent friend and supporter of the party was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Manners-Sutton (d. 1828). Among the clergy of lower rank the leading names are William Jones of Nayland,[1] Henry Handley Norris, who for many years worked in South Hackney with his brother-in-law, Archdeacon Watson, Hugh James Rose, Christopher Wordsworth, brother of the poet and Master of Trinity, Cambridge, Thomas Sikes, rector of Guilsborough, Thomas Rennell, and Archdeacon D'Oyly. The two most prominent laymen of the party, to whom all looked for leadership and inspiration, were Joshua Watson and William Stevens. Both followed business careers, and were extraordinarily liberal in support of Church work. Watson was founder of the National Society, and for some time its treasurer, and treasurer also of the S.P.C.K. Stevens is remembered, among other reasons, as the leading member of the Nobody's Club, which was started in his honour. Some of the Lake poets, in addition, had strong sympathies with the party. Its literary organs were the *British Critic*, of which at one time Van Mildert was editor, and the *Churchman's Remembrancer*, an issue of tracts, designed to promote Church teaching and principles. The members of the party who were more especially connected with Hackney were known as the "Hackney phalanx" or "Clapton sect," in distinction from the Evangelical "Clapham sect."

It is unnecessary to discuss at any length the theological writings of the group. It will be enough to indicate the main positions for which they contended, so far as these are con-

[1] Jones died in 1800, and so properly belongs to the century before.

cerned with problems of Church organisation and the seat of authority. It was their agreement on this class of question which constituted them a group or school; and these were the problems which were destined to come into prominence in the immediate future.

Archdeacon Daubeny was the most militant member of the party, the narrowest in his sympathies, the most dogmatic in his utterances, and, perhaps, the most passionate in his attachment to the Church. He cannot, therefore, be taken as altogether a fair representative of the general temper of the party. Yet most of them would, I think, have subscribed heartily to the main principles enunciated in the famous *Guide to the Church* (1798); indeed, we find in their writings those same principles, as firmly, if not as pugnaciously, maintained. Daubeny emphasizes the importance of the following doctrines:

(*a*) The doctrine of Apostolical Succession. The visible Church in respect of its constitution, must, he says, consist of men duly commissioned to their office by those who can trace back their descent to the Apostles. The Christian priesthood is a divine institution. It had its beginning from God, and it can be continued only in the way which God appointed for that purpose. "What that way was the Apostolic practice has plainly shown. For Christ was in all that the Apostles did." [1] "The Church of England in her canons exclusively appropriates the title of a *true* and *lawful Church* to that Society of Christians in this country assembled under Episcopal government; and determines all separatists from it to be schismatics." [2]

(*b*) Sacraments are not "seals of the divine covenant," but only human ordinances, if administered by men who cannot trace back their commission to the Apostles. You leave the sacraments behind you if you leave Christ's Church. Without a priest there is no eucharistic sacrifice, and if no sacrifice, then no receiving the body and blood of Christ.[3] "There is a holiness of *office* independent of the holiness of the minister; the former being essential to the validity of the ministerial act." [4]

[1] *Guide to the Church*, 2nd ed., 1804, Preface, p. x.

[2] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. iv.

[3] Appendix to *Guide*, pp. 310, 311. Daubeny qualifies this statement by speaking of a "commemorative sacrifice" and a "typical representation."

[4] *Guide*, p. 72.

(*c*) Upon every Christian lies the obligation to Church unity. The Act of Toleration may have removed civil penalties, but whatever liberty that Act may allow in respect of Christian conformity "must be understood as given in a case in which no human legislature has any liberty to grant."[1] The existing prejudice against the Church of Rome is, he urges, unreasonable. In the most essential articles of the Christian faith the Roman and Anglican Churches are agreed.

(*d*) Private judgment in religion cannot be allowed. "In religious matters no man can have a right to judge otherwise than God has judged for him."[2] Conscience, in its true meaning, is the reflection of a law or standard imposed from without.[3] Daubeny, in a word, places his main emphasis upon Church polity. The guarantee for purity of doctrine lies in the existence of a society episcopally organised, which can trace back an unbroken descent from the Apostles. He offers us a clear-cut scheme, rigid in outline, and anathematises all who will not accept it.[4]

Van Mildert, in his Bampton Lectures,[5] insists, in like manner, that Episcopacy is of the very essence of the visible Church, and that the sacraments and the priesthood are "interwoven into the very substance of Christianity, and inseparable from its general design." Against Methodists and Enthusiasts he and Marsh display unrelenting hostility. Bishop Horsley, in his primary charge as Bishop of St. David's,[6] condemns the irregular ministry of the Methodists, and says that it is with hazard to himself that any private person meddles with the preacher's office. He emphasizes the fact that the clergy have been given from above a distinct spiritual commission,[7] and bids them not be afraid of being called High Churchmen. "To be a *High Churchman* in the only sense which the word can be allowed to bear as applicable to any in the present day

[1] *Guide to the Church*, p. 140. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 146. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

[4] He violently attacked Calvinism. He was answered by Sir Richard Hill in *An Apology for Brotherly Love*, and by Overton in *The True Churchman Ascertained*. To this latter book Daubeny replied in *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*.

[5] *An Inquiry into the General Principles of Scripture Interpretation*, 1814.

[6] 1790.

[7] "He who thinks of God's ministers as the mere servants of the State is out of the Church, severed from it by a kind of self-excommunication."

—God forbid that this should ever cease to be my public pretension, my pride, my glory!" Horsley, at the same time, was wise enough to see that the Articles were capable of a modified Calvinistic interpretation, and advises the clergy to leave the Calvinistic controversy alone.[1]

Thomas Sikes, who agreed with Daubeny and Van Mildert as to the necessity of Episcopacy and the Apostolical Succession, was the author of a remarkable utterance which may fairly be described as a prophecy of coming events. He saw a tendency in his age to neglect the importance of that article of the Creed which speaks of the Holy Catholic Church. "Our confusion nowadays is chiefly owing to the want of asserting this one article of the Creed; and there will be yet more confusion attending its revival, when it is thrust on minds unprepared, and on an uncatechised Church."[2] He urges the clergy to instruct the people in the meaning of this article. When the Oxford Movement began, the question of the nature of the Church and its authority came at once to the front. The problem was not simply that of the true constitution of the Church, but of what the catholicity of the Church implied. Did membership in the Church involve the acceptance of certain doctrines? If so, must not the Church teach these doctrines authoritatively, and must not its members accept the instruction thus given without question? If visible unity could not be found, might not its place be taken by a catholicity of doctrinal belief and outward observance?[3]

I have spoken of Alexander Knox (d. 1831) as a member of this group, and it is true that, if he is to be classed with others, his place is among the Orthodox. But, in reality, he stands alone, or with only Bishop Jebb of Limerick as his companion. He was a man of broader, and at the same time far more delicate, spiritual sympathies than any of his Orthodox contemporaries; and, in particular, was the direct precursor and prophet of the Oxford Movement. A distinct gulf separates Daubeny and Van Mildert from Keble and Newman, whatever doctrinal

[1] *Charge to the Rochester Clergy*, 1800.

[2] Pusey quotes this utterance in his *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury*, 1841. Cp. *note* on p. 42 of Overton's *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*.

[3] For an interesting account of the meaning of Sikes's prophecy, cp. Cornish, *A History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. i. pp. 66–69.

agreement there may be between them. But with Knox the case is different. He breathes an atmosphere and speaks a language which are almost identical with their own. I have not been able to discover that the Tractarians ever sufficiently acknowledged their indebtedness to Knox. Knox was an Irish layman who was at one time private secretary to Lord Castlereagh. He was urged to serve in Parliament as the member for Derry after the union of Great Britain and Ireland, but refused, and turned instead to theological writing, his chief correspondent being Bishop Jebb.

We may well begin our account of him by referring to a letter, written in 1816, *On the Situation and Prospects of the Established Church*, in which he diagnoses the position of the Church of England.[1] He complains of the champions of High Church orthodoxy that they are suspicious of movements of piety, and lack that "interior learning" and knowledge of the needs of the human spirit in its search for God which Wesley and the Evangelicals possessed. "Inward religion is little less than systematically exploded." High Churchmen, he says, in combating their Evangelical opponents, attack what is valuable as well as what is objectionable, and thereby weaken their power of appeal and their chance of influencing the popular mind.[2] Frigidity he notes as one of the characteristics of the age.[3] Knox has been called a Churchman of the type of Wesley.[4] Wesley's influence on him was marked. He defines Methodism as that "spiritual view of religion which implies an habitual devotedness to God," and he classes himself among the Methodists. He values the Evangelicals, not for their doctrine, but because they had, more than any others, kept experimental religion alive in the Church.[5] He notes, but without anxiety, the growing spirit of liberalism and anti-ecclesiasticism in the nation. This, he prophesies, will be the stimulus which will arouse the Church from its indifference. "The old High Church race is worn out." The framework of doctrine and organisation is there, but no life animates the body. Trial and persecution

[1] *Remains of Alexander Knox*, 2nd ed., 1836, vol. i.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 64.

[3] *Thirty Years' Correspondence between John Jebb and A. Knox, Esq.*, 2nd ed., 1836, vol. ii. p. 506.

[4] By Hunt in *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 44.

[5] *Remains*, vol. iv. p. 105.

will be the breath from the four winds which will make the dead bones live. Knox diagnoses the situation exactly when he says that religious feeling in the Orthodox party has disappeared, the feeling for antiquity and continuity and corporate life in a society, the indefinable sentiment for the Church and its liturgy which a reverent and sympathetic study of the Prayer Book can call forth. Preachers in the Church, he says, preach dull, moralising sermons, "the result of a kind of intellectual pumping: there is no gushing from the spring."[1] In addition, he notes how an unreasoning suspicion of Rome has blinded men to their heritage in the Church Catholic, and made them indifferent to the search for the truth which lies imbedded in error. "As matters are, dread of transubstantiation has made the sacrament a ceremony; and to ward off infallibility, every man has been encouraged to shape a creed for himself."[2] Knox would find the remedy for this state of things, first, in the revival within the Church of personal religion; secondly, in the promulgation of a more inspiring doctrine as to the meaning of the Church. He calls himself a Christian of the first three centuries in regard to the Catholic Church, and a Christian of the seventeenth century in regard to that reformed branch of it established in England. The Church of England is "not Protestant, but a reformed portion of the Church Catholic." To a Lutheran body it unites a Catholic soul.[3] Hence, while Knox holds the authority of the Roman Church to be a tyranny, he values the remains of primitive catholicity within it.

Of the Prayer Book he speaks with a feeling which only long habits of use and devotion could have generated. Its sobriety and moderation, its inexhaustible spiritual nutriment, the guarantee which it affords of continuity of doctrine, have so endeared it to him, that it has become part of himself.[4] With

[1] *Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 14.

[2] *Remains*, vol. i. p. 58.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 130; and Preface, p. cxiii.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 69. "Our vitality as a Church consists in our identity of organisation and of mental character with the Church Catholic; and as our unbroken episcopacy implies the first, our Liturgy, and that alone (because an effluence of the Catholic religion) contains the other."

Cp. also p. 61. "I know nothing settled in the whole Reformed body but the Liturgy of the Church of England. I do not add the Articles, not because I have any real quarrel with them, but because they have not, in any respect, the same intrinsic authority."

regard to the connection of Church and State, while Knox does not despise the Establishment as a means of leavening the national life, the following quotation shows clearly his opinion as to the true nature of the Church: "An Establishment alone, I conceive, affords these provisions [*i.e.* continuity and stability]; but not everything called an Establishment. What I intend by this term consists far more in the interior organisation than in any external alliance. An Hierarchical Church has the nature of an Establishment whether it is, or is not, allied with the State." [1] But the same cannot be said of a body of presbyters, even though they be State-supported.

The Church was to hear much in a few years of the maxim, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est.* Knox called attention to it as something which was in danger of being forgotten. He points out that, while the Church of England, in common with other reformed Churches, agrees that all fundamentals must be referred to Scripture for their proof, it alone among these Churches gives a place to "the concurrent voice of sacred antiquity." [2] In this maxim he finds a sure guide both for belief and practice. Knox, like Kaye of Lincoln, was learned in patristic studies, and is always eager to show that the Church of England has preserved an unbroken continuity in doctrine and organisation with the primitive Church.

Something, too, must be said as to Knox's sacramental views. His views on Baptism need not detain us long. He points out that we have to distinguish between the word "Baptism" as used for the whole sacrament, outward and inward, and as used for the outward part only. In the latter case we may, he says, identify Baptism and Regeneration, for here Regeneration implies the contracting of indelible relations, which, according to the use made of them, tend to infinite gain or infinite loss. In the former case the Church teaches plainly that spiritual regeneration is not identical with the ordinance, but is the effect of a heavenly influence which may be lost. In the case of adults the Church of England holds the concurrence of the two to be conditional; but infants, it teaches, receive the

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 425. Jebb would have agreed with Knox in this matter; cp. *Correspondence*, letter to Knox, cxxxiv.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 43.

divine grace unconditionally. "Nothing less can be concluded than that a vital germ of all virtuous dispositions and pious affections is implanted in the mind of the baptized infant," but the germ "will not grow up of itself." Hence it often follows that there is no identity between the baptized and the spiritually regenerate.[1]

Knox wrote a *Treatise on the Use and Import of the Eucharistic Symbols*, with a double object; first, to link up the doctrine of the Real Presence and spiritual efficacy of the consecrated elements with the teaching of Christ, St. Paul, and the Fathers; secondly, to show that the true doctrine of the Eucharist is that of Ridley.[2] He attacks Waterland for wishing to destroy the notion of a mysterious connection between the symbols and the divine grace, and quotes with approval Horsley, who said that the matter of the sacrament was by Christ's appointment, and the operation of the Spirit, "a vehicle of grace to the believer's soul."[3] He says that his study of the Fathers has shown him that they took the same view. The consecrated elements, being vehicles of Christ's saving grace, may be regarded as "in that respect the permanent representatives of His incarnate Person."[4] By them, though we cannot explain the process, "God works invisibly in us." Knox urges that there was a good reason for this ordinance, because only with difficulty do our sceptical minds retain the thought that spiritual grace is conveyed supernaturally.[5] He combats the argument that the Christian can expect benefit from the sacrament only in proportion to the actual state of his devotional feelings. "Whereas, if there be a persuasion that divine grace is communicated in and through the sacrament, by a special exercise of divine power, it will follow that, not an inability to co-operate, but solely an incapacity to receive, will

[1] Cp. *Remains*, vol. i. pp. 488–510.

[2] Cp. the Prefatory Letter to the *Treatise*. The latter is included in the *Remains*. Ridley, he points out, derived his views from Ratram or Bertram, a monk of the Abbey of Corbey in the diocese of Amiens. In the ninth century Bertram answered Paschasius Radbertus of the same monastery, who was the first to propound the doctrine of transubstantiation. Ridley influenced Cranmer, and his views were embodied in the first reformed Communion Service in 1548. After a reaction they were finally restored in 1661.

[3] *Charge to Rochester Clergy*.

[4] *Remains*, vol. ii. p. 155.

[5] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 233.

obstruct the communication."[1] He rests his belief on the principle, adopted by the revisers of 1661, that the sacraments have their effect, where the receiver "doth not *ponere obicem*, put any bar against them." "The co-operation of mind on the part of the receiver, which in all the common means of edification must be deemed indispensable, was, in the Eucharist peculiarly and mysteriously superseded; and *capacity* the sole requisite for the reception of the heavenly blessing."[2]

In conclusion, we may note Knox's view of inspiration. He admits that inspiration allows of degrees, has existed in every age, and is to be found among heathen writers. In this opinion he had the support of Jebb, who was one of the most distinguished Biblical scholars of his time. In a letter to Jebb, Knox remarks that the idea of Scripture being inspired "has kept very many back from exercising their judgments on its structure and composition."[3]

I have dwelt at some length on Knox, because he is unquestionably one of the most striking figures in the Church in the early years of the nineteenth century, and because, as these extracts from his writings show, he anticipated the Oxford Movement. An immense interval separates Knox from such a man as Daubeny. With the latter all is mechanical, rigid, dogmatic. The former, while his teaching is equally definite, has a breadth of vision and a real sympathy with other modes of presenting Christian truth. The one has atmosphere, the other is without it. Daubeny is like a landscape seen in a hard, clear light, where every outline is over-defined. Knox is like the same landscape softened and mellowed into a suggestive mystery. Bishop Jebb was the channel through which much of Knox's influence was exercised; but, while the two

[1] *Remains*, p. 235.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 280. Knox denies that he is teaching a doctrine of the *opus operatum;* but he comes very near it. He draws a distinction between passivity "in the actual matter of reception," and passivity as to desire and holy intention. But he states distinctly that the divine agency "works its purpose, not on a co-operative, but on a passive subject." His argument is that "we cannot co-operate in the divine act, because it is so purely divine as to exclude even subordinate co-agency; but we may obstruct, or wholly resist its effect, by a positive unpreparedness for any such benefit." Cp. Postscript to the *Treatise*, where he develops his argument.

[3] *Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 41.

friends reacted on each other, the place of honour belongs to Knox, who combined with nobility of character and a genius for religion a remarkable power of insight into the needs of the Church of England, and a largeness of mind which is too often lacking in the theologian.

CHAPTER VI

THE EARLY LIBERALS

THEOLOGICAL liberalism in the early years of the nineteenth century suffered from the general stagnation which had overtaken all parties in the Church. It is not till we reach the men of the Oriel school that any movement on a considerable scale can be detected in the direction of a broader and more progressive creed. Only three names call for any mention, and of these two may be passed by with a word. Paley and Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, both of whom, however, may more fitly be regarded as belonging to the eighteenth century,[1] were in favour of the abolition of subscription, and of the revision of the liturgy. The former argued that only a Church which claimed infallibility had the right to impose creeds upon its members; the latter objected strongly to the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, and held that, as speculative doctrines must always be matters of dispute, it was unfair to ask men to subscribe to them. In addition, a national Church should throw open its doors as wide as possible.[2] The controversy about subscription dates from the Feathers Tavern petition of the preceding century, but its echoes were prolonged into the nineteenth, and it was the subject in which the Latitudinarians were chiefly interested.

The one name which deserves more consideration is that of Robert Fellowes (1771–1847), a theological free-lance whose unorthodoxy increased as he grew older. Being unbeneficed, he was perhaps more at liberty to express his opinions than he would have been had he held a living. His two most important books are *Religion without Cant* (1811), and *The Religion of the Universe* (1836). He wrote the former, which is far less unorthodox than the latter, with the double object

[1] Paley died in 1805. Watson's dates are 1737–1816.

[2] Cp. Hunt's *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 3–4.

of defending the principles of the Church of England against dissenters, and of clearing the doctrines of Christianity from the gross misinterpretations with which, as he held, they had been covered. The doctrine which he most violently attacks is that of original sin. He denies that Scripture teaches the innate depravity of man, and treats the story of the Fall as allegorical.[1] Of the doctrine of the Trinity he says that the subject is beyond the grasp of human understanding.[2] The later volume shows Fellowes in full revolt against the orthodox creed. He had apparently become an enthusiastic student of physical science, and says that a general study of the sciences will do more than anything else to promote morality. He advocates the provision of parish telescopes, in order that the parishioners may gaze upon the rings of Saturn, and so appreciate better the goodness and wisdom of God.[3] In his earlier book he had attacked emotionalism in religion; here he makes religion merely a matter of intellectual culture. "Religion and science, according to my notions, are identical." The volume is an argument for a pure theism, based on the evidences of the divine wisdom and beneficence in nature. Miracle he entirely rejects. Prayer, he says, implies imperfection in God; while creeds and dogmas are born of superstition and mystery, and are only kept alive by priestly artifice.[4] These tirades against orthodoxy call for no further notice. The important thing in the book is the author's acceptance of an evolutionary creed. The word evolution is not mentioned, but Fellowes views nature as a scene of progressive advance. He accepts the teaching of geology as to the age of the earth, holds that the earliest forms of life were very simple,[5] and questions whether the doctrine of special creation is true of man. He sees that such evolutionary beliefs in no way militate against theism. "Whether his [*i.e.* man's] existence was owing to the immediate volition of the Deity, or was the effect of second causes coming to a certain point in the series . . . the divine agency is equally manifested."[6] He is a firm believer in immortality, and argues that the fact that man is the crowning term of a long development, and has in him such capacity for progress, gives us strong reasons for anticipating that he will continue to advance in another sphere of existence. He complains bitterly of the unprogressiveness

[1] P. 56. [2] P. 376. [3] P. 58. [4] P. 86. [5] P. 12. [6] P. 54.

of contemporary theology. This is the root of his quarrel with orthodoxy. Though he lost his intellectual balance in his later writings, we must give him the credit of being in advance of his age, and of putting forward views the truth of which later research has abundantly confirmed.

Unlike the Evangelicals or the Orthodox, the men whom we are now to consider flew no party banner, and championed no closely defined system of doctrine. Common ties indeed united them, such as their sympathy with movements of reform, whether in Church or State, their opposition to Tractarianism, and their advocacy of free inquiry in theology, but no more distinctive common name can be given them than that of liberal theologians, and of such there are many varieties. Most of them were Oxford men who were in one way or another intimately connected with Oriel College, and this Oxford group was called by their contemporaries the Noetics, or Intellectuals. The nickname was eminently appropriate, for the work which they accomplished was just that of subjecting to the criticism of reason and history the conventionalities and dogmas of traditional religious orthodoxy.

Edward Copleston, Provost of Oriel, 1814–1828, and afterwards Bishop of Llandaff, may be regarded as the intellectual father of the group; though it must not be forgotten that it was Eveleigh, his predecessor in the provostship, who first introduced into the University and his own college reforms which helped to remove from the former the well-merited reproach of being a home of idleness and unintellectuality, and made the latter for some years the leading college in Oxford. Eveleigh did two things. In face of great opposition, he succeeded in persuading the University to adopt a system of public examination for the B.A. degree, which had hitherto been conferred without any proof of intellectual proficiency in the candidate. He also established the rule, that fellowships in Oriel were to be given only to men who showed that they possessed real learning. Copleston carried on and developed Eveleigh's work. Under his rule admission to fellowships "was accorded only to evidence of power and originality; not to what a man had read, but to what he was like."[1] While he remained in Oxford he was a powerful liberalising influence.

[1] Cp. the sketch of Copleston in Tuckwell's *Pre-Tractarian Oxford.*

Whately, Hampden, Baden-Powell were among his pupils. It is difficult to over-estimate the debt which the younger generation at Oriel owed him. Himself possessed of a keenly alert mind, he taught them to reason and criticise. As regards churchmanship, he may be placed in the more liberal wing of the old High Church or Orthodox party. His views upon the Church are expounded in the Bosworth Lectures which he gave in Oriel.[1]

In these he points out that the Reformers nowhere pronounced episcopacy to be essential to the constitution of the Church, or to the validity of orders; but he held the Church to be a visible, divinely instituted society, having spiritual authority, and possessed of a ministry which, viewed as a whole, could prove a continuous succession from apostolic times. Such succession, however, involved no theory of transmitted virtue, and no sacrificial or sacramental character in the individual minister. Tractarianism he described as "that folly."

Edward Hawkins succeeded Copleston as Provost, having been already a fellow of Oriel since 1813. Like Copleston, he condemned the Tractarian doctrine of Apostolical Succession, as having no clear warrant in revelation. The Tractarian, he held, had superadded a theory to a fact, and refused to distinguish the permanence of the institution of the threefold ministry from the exact succession of the individual ministers.[2] Hawkins was one of the first to denounce Tractarian teaching, and his action in dismissing the three Oriel tutors, Robert Wilberforce, Newman, and Hurrell Froude, marks his disapproval of the system of which they were leading representatives. Personal jealousy may have partly influenced him in this action. He saw that they were likely to supplant his own influence with the undergraduates. But underneath any personal feeling lay a real dislike of Tractarianism. It is this dislike which links him with the Noetics. In other respects he differed from them. For example, he adopted a sullen attitude of resistance to the reforms of the Royal Commission

[1] The lectures as a whole were not printed; but X and XI are given in Whately's *Remains of the Late Edward Copleston*, 1854.

[2] Cp. a sermon on the Apostolical Succession preached February, 1842, at the consecration of Gilbert, Bishop of Chichester.

which affected the internal administration of the College, and would not allow that any change was needed. Again, in 1818, he preached a sermon on Tradition in which he argued that doctrine was not to be learned from Scripture, but from the Church, Scripture being called in only to prove the truth of the Church's teaching—a view to which none of the Noetics could have subscribed. The influence of Hawkins cannot be compared with that of Copleston. The latter inspired; the former did not. But Hawkins deserves to be remembered as one who tried to maintain a more liberal tradition when the forces of ecclesiastical reaction were at their height.

Richard Whately, who owed more to the influence of Copleston than any of his contemporaries at Oriel, may be called the typical Noetic. We may characterise his work by saying that he brought critical reason and historical research to bear upon the terminology and beliefs of traditional theology. Party spirit and the catchwords of ecclesiastical parties he detested, seeking always to penetrate to the real meaning of customary phrases.[1] To the end of his life he displayed the temper of the questioner. Endowed with a large fund of robust common sense, and with a mind cast in a logical mould, he shed the dry light of reason on any subject which he investigated. He appreciated the logic rather than the poetry of life. But, reasoner though he was, none recognised more plainly than he the limitations of human reason in dealing with the ultimate problems of religion. In the Bampton Lectures he insists upon the value of a healthy agnosticism, and points out how we habitually use words like "time," "cause," "eternity," without any clear understanding of their meaning.[2] He encouraged all who came in contact with him to think, bidding them remember that the cause of truth could suffer no harm from honest inquiry.

One of his chief objects was to promote a more intelligent study of Scripture; and here the *Essays on Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul* (1828) are characteristic of his general attitude. He examines in this volume the significance of a group of Pauline words and phrases, "election,"

[1] Cp. his Bampton Lectures, 1822, *The Use and Abuse of Party Feeling in Matters of Religion.*

[2] Cp. Lecture vi.

"imputed righteousness," "law and grace," and the like, which had gradually acquired a theological meaning far removed from that of the original, and had been made centres of controversy; with the result, that men received the impression that the Epistles, if not Scripture as a whole, were a mass of puzzles. Whately urges the necessity of studying the general drift and design of each Biblical writer. Isolated texts or passages could be made to mean anything. The student must come to the Bible with an unprejudiced mind. Above all, he must not expect to find in it a scientific or systematic exposition of doctrine. Scripture, he tells us, possesses no technical vocabulary, and does not always give the same meaning to a term.[1] With Hampden, he points out that the teaching of the Bible is practical, not speculative, in tendency.[2] As we should expect, he holds a view of inspiration broader than that which was generally current. Some parts of Scripture, he insists, have not the character of revelation; many of its historical statements, for example, are of little importance. And it is no function of a true revelation to anticipate the discoveries of geology or astronomy.[3] It was Whately's mission to make men think about their religion, and to strip the truth of the conventionalities with which popular theology had clothed it. Superstition of any kind he could not tolerate, and no man had a keener eye for "the falsehood of extremes." German rationalism inspired his dislike as much as Tractarianism. That his writings are not much read to-day is doubtless due to the fact that they were called forth by the circumstances of his time, and so served a temporary purpose.[4] But that purpose was one of high importance for a generation which was just beginning to feel the pressure of new ways of thinking, and witnessed in the Oxford Movement a deliberate attempt to suppress liberalism in theology.

Whately's opposition to the Tractarians was mainly due to their use of the principle of authority. Two results, he felt, flowed from their exaltation of the authority of tradition. An unintelligent faith took the place of reasonable belief based

[1] Essay III.

[2] Cp. *Some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, 1825; Essay IV (4th ed., 1837).

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 236–7.

[4] Cp. Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 53.

upon an investigation of evidence; and the study of Scripture, the true fount of authority, was neglected.[1] He regarded Tractarian teaching as having an infidel tendency, because it disparaged reason and inquiry. He criticised Coleridge for laying too much emphasis on internal evidence, the witness of the heart, and spoke of neglect of the study of evidences as one of the characteristics of the age.[2] He viewed with alarm the spread of Tractarianism, and published his *Cautions for the Times* (1853) to bring home to the popular mind the dangerous character of the movement. His biographer says of him:—"Generally speaking, Whately occupied an intermediate position between the high dogmatic school in the Church, and the school which refines away dogma into mere sentiment." But there is evidence, I think, that his ecclesiastical opinions underwent a change, and that his later views upon the Church and its authority were not so pronounced as his earlier. In *Letters on the Church: By an Episcopalian* (1826)[3] he defines the Church as "a body-corporate, of divine institution," approves of the doctrine of Apostolical Succession in so far as it witnesses to the principle of delegation of authority, and emphasizes the disciplinary right of the Church over those who voluntarily enrol themselves as its members.[4] He advocates the complete separation of Church and State, maintaining that no alliance between the two is possible without a violation of the conditions which Christ laid down for His spiritual kingdom.[5] As a Church, he says, we ask nothing of the State, but "to let us alone." To the end of his life he remained in favour of Disestablishment, but without disendowment. In 1839, however, we find him arguing that Scripture lays down no directions for the formal organisation of any Christian Society, but merely sets forth the great principles in the light of which Christians in all ages might group themselves into societies.[6] "The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the Human Race

[1] *Cautions for the Times*, Nos. xi. and xv.

[2] *Life and Correspondence of Richard Whately*, by E. Jane Whately, 1866, vol. ii. pp. 154–5.

[3] Whately never admitted or denied the authorship of this book; but there is no doubt that it is his.

[4] Letter iii. [5] Letter iv.

[6] Cp. note A to Essay III in *Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith, which may arise from the Teaching or the Conduct of its Professors.*

one; but not as a *Society.*" The unity of the Church is a unity, based, not on an identity of organisation, but on the acceptance of common principles. "It is one Society only when considered in its future existence."[1] What, he asks, is the Universal Church? Where are its decisions? What are its constituted organs for making such decisions? There is no one community on earth, he answers, which has any claim to be so recognised; and at no time was the supremacy of any one Church universally acknowledged. "The Church," he says, is a term applicable only to the Jewish people, among whom the Church of God was one society.[2] In *Cautions for the Times* he criticises the Tractarian view of Apostolical Succession, and asserts that Church government need not necessarily be episcopal.[3] He refuses to consider tradition as a fount of authority parallel to Scripture, and says that an appeal to the sanction of the Church adds nothing to the truth of any doctrine.

Renn Dickson Hampden was another important member of the group. I question if justice has been done to his merits as a theologian. Dean Church, in *The Oxford Movement,* describes him as a confused thinker, who lacked the mental grasp necessary for handling so difficult a subject as that which he set himself to treat in his Bampton Lectures.[4] Such a verdict appears to me unfair. I shall hope to show that, however unclear some of his statements in the lectures may have been, Hampden displayed an insight into coming developments in

[1] Cp. note A to Essay III in *Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith.*

[2] *Ibid.*, cp. the following characteristic passage in Essay III, pp. 138, 139:—"If they shall say, Behold! he is in the secret chambers (of some conclave or Council of Divines), or, Behold! he is in the wilderness (inspiring some enthusiastic and disorderly pretender to a new light), go not after them. Whether they fix on this or on that particular Church as the abode of such inspired authority—or on the Universal Church; which, again, is to be marked out either as consisting of the *numerical* majority, or as the majority of those who lived within a certain (arbitrarily-fixed) period,—or, a majority of the *sound* and orthodox believers, *i.e.* of those in *agreement* with the person who so designates them;—all these, in their varying opinions as to the seat of the supposed inspired authority, are alike in this; that they are following no track marked out by Christ or His Apostles, but merely their own unauthorised conjectures. While one sets up a golden image in Bethel, and another in Dan, saying, 'These be thy gods, O Israel!' all are, in fact, 'going astray after their own inventions,' and 'worshipping the work of their own hands.'"

[3] No. xv.

[4] Chap. ix.

theology which justifies us in giving him a high place among the theologians of the century.

A Whig in politics, Hampden must be classed as a liberal theologian, though he was a strong and decided Churchman.[1] With the storm of abuse and persecution which broke over his head on his appointment in 1836 to the Regius Professorship of Divinity in Oxford, and gathered again, when, eleven years later, he was nominated to the see of Hereford, we are not here directly concerned. The painful story may be read elsewhere.[2] Suffice it to say, that he was himself above all things a man of peace, and was deeply pained to find himself a centre of strife. Of no man were the words truer which were spoken by Dr. Hinds in the sermon preached at his consecration—"the occasion of strife is not necessarily the cause of it." It is Hampden the thinker with whom we have to deal. The paramount authority of Scripture was the ruling principle of his theology. In common with English theologians of his time, he held views as to the nature of inspiration which were far more rigid than those which obtain to-day; but, when we have made that reservation, we must regard him as an advocate of free inquiry, as one who was not afraid to subject to criticism the dogmas of traditional theology.[3]

His Bampton Lectures in 1832, the germs of which are to be found in two earlier publications, *An Essay on the Philosophical Evidence of Christianity*, and an article written for the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* on *Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastic Philosophy*, may be described as an attack on the excessive development of the dogmatic principle, and an attempt, in the light of the history of past theology, to determine the place and limits of dogma. He chose as his subject *The Scholastic Philosophy considered in its Relation to Christian Theology*,[4] and called the lectures an inquiry into the nature of theological terms. He sees in Scholasticism the final result of a method of reasoning which had dominated philosophy for

[1] Cp. Archdeacon Clarke's recollections in *Memorials of Bishop Hampden*, by Henrietta Hampden, 1871.

[2] *E.g.* in the *Memorials*, in Church's *Oxford Movement*, and Tuckwell's *Pre-Tractarian Oxford*.

[3] He condemned, however, the teaching of *Essays and Reviews;* cp. his Charge of 1862, most of which is given in *Memorials*, chap. xx.

[4] The references are to the 2nd edition, 1837.

a long period. The main point upon which he insists throughout is the necessity of distinguishing between Christian truth itself and the mode of its presentation. Christian truth is to be found in Scripture, and must be accepted as from God; but the speculations and definitions of theology, necessary though they may be for the defence of the faith, are not to be considered essential parts of the divine revelation. "I insist on Scripture truth as distinct from Human truth—the doctrines of God's word as distinct from the commandments of men."[1] Scholastic theology, he argues, made the fatal mistake of regarding revelation as a demonstrative science, a system of deductions from certain primary truths about God accepted by faith. Its maxim was, "that is true which is logically deducible from certain premises." Hence it delighted in abstractions and in spinning cobwebs. The intellect ran riot, with the result that authority had to be invoked to determine which of the logical developments of the primitive belief were to be accepted. Theological terms, he tells us, are peculiarly liable to the abuse of being taken for the very truths themselves which they seek to define. They pass into popular speech, and are used without any thought of their meaning. It is forgotten that they are but symbols of truths which they can only imperfectly adumbrate. Hence arises logomachy, "that fruitful mother of controversy." Hampden's battle-cry is, "Back to the Scriptures; Scripture, not tradition." The Bible records facts, and facts are the only sure basis on which we can build. His language here, it must be confessed, is not always clear. In one passage he says that in Scripture there are no doctrines.[2] In another he includes doctrines under the head of facts.[3] What he seems to have meant was that dogmatic definition is not the object of Scripture, which has always a practical aim in view. Would St. Paul, he asks, have adopted the epistolary style if he had wished to communicate doctrine in scientific terms? When the revelation was given to the Israelites, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," it was not a speculative unity of the Godhead which was revealed, but a teaching which was to check the worship of the stars. He bids us note the immense difference between the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. The one gives us facts, the others speculations.

[1] P. 57. [2] P. 374. [3] P. 45.

Scripture doubtless contains the substance of the later doctrines and definitions, but it is Hampden's contention that the successive creeds are not merely "the manhood and ripening" of the earlier truths. Discussion has given to them new forms, and, in the process of defining, extraneous matter has been added.[1] The difference between the New Testament and technical theology is that in the one you have divine truth, guaranteed by inspiration, in the other the human rendering of divine truth.[2]

What, then, is the true nature and use of dogmatic theology? Hampden discusses this question in the eighth lecture. He reaches the conclusion that, as dogmatic theology arose out of the necessity of meeting heresy, so it must be limited to the negative function of excluding all notions which have not the express sanction of Scripture. Here it is valuable as a philosophy of human Christianity, "of Christianity in the world, as it has been acted on by the force of the human intellect." Christian truth, coming into contact with various systems of human thought, was of necessity coloured by them. It was inevitable that attempts should be made to translate it into terms of these systems, and that the same process should continue in the future. The function of dogmatic theology is to guard the substance of the original deposit, and to see that in the process of translation the primitive revelation suffers no loss. That it had so suffered at the hands of the Schoolmen is Hampden's contention. It had been obscured and altered by over-definition. Scholastic philosophy, he says, lies between us and the immediate diffusion of truth from heaven as "an atmosphere of mist through which the early beams of the Divine Light have been transfused."[3]

Dogmatic theology, again, serves as a bond of social union. What political institutions are to the social principles of our nature, that dogmatic theology is to Christianity. Dogma is necessary, because you must preserve from dissolution the common beliefs which are presupposed by the existence of any society of worshippers. The anathemas of creeds and councils are "the penalties of social religion."[4]

The lectures aroused considerable interest, but it was not till four years after their delivery that Hampden's opponents

[1] P. 33. [2] P. 357. [3] P. 8. [4] P. 383.

attacked them as heretical. In the interval Tractarianism had been gaining ground, and Hampden had issued the pamphlet in which he advocated the abolition of tests, and the admission of dissenters to the University.[1] He did so on the ground that Christianity was a matter of the heart, not of the intellect, and that theological opinion, as it was not Christianity, ought not to be made a bond of union among Christians. The publication of the pamphlet roused his foes. On his being offered the Regius Professorship of Divinity, they set on foot a violent agitation against the appointment, and did all they could to inflame public opinion. Newman published an *Elucidation of Dr. Hampden's Theological Statements*, a work full of animus, in which, in the most unfair way, as Hampden's friends thought, sentences from the lectures were printed, torn from their context, and stripped of their qualifying safeguards. Pusey followed this up by a book in which he severely criticised Hampden's opinions, and showed what he conceived to be their dangerous tendency.[2] Hampden, while deeply hurt by this attack, and genuinely surprised that his teaching should be regarded as unorthodox, remained calm, devoted his inaugural lecture as Professor to an attempt to remove misunderstandings,[3] and set himself to write for the second edition of the lectures an introduction, in which he sought to explain to the public the real nature of his views.

What estimate are we to take of the controversy as a whole, and of Hampden's merits as a theologian? It is not surprising that the Tractarians singled him out for attack. He was the uncompromising opponent of the principles of tradition and Church authority which they were defending. It must be admitted, too, that there is truth in Dean Church's criticism, that the lectures contained sentiments and ideas which it was hard to reconcile with the main teaching of the volume; and that Hampden seemed to think that, because the book abounded in orthodox statements, anything unorthodox in it should be overlooked. Church points out, in defending Newman, that Hampden's explanations of his position were given later. They

[1] *Observations on Religious Dissent*, 1834.

[2] *Dr. Hampden's Theological Statements and the Thirty-nine Articles Compared.* By a Resident Member of Convocation (1836).

[3] For an account of the lecture cp. Arnold's article, "The Oxford Malignants," *Edinburgh Review*, April 1836.

were not in the lectures, and Newman's attack was therefore, he considers, justified. Again, there was soundness in Pusey's criticisms. He thought that Hampden had under-estimated the amount of definite dogma which the Bible contained; and that he was wrong in treating the theology of the Fathers as identical with that of the Schoolmen. It is, I think, probable that Hampden read into the Fathers a completer scholasticism than they contain, and failed to do justice to their endeavours to balance a metaphysical by an ethical presentation of the truth. But none of these criticisms really detract from Hampden's true greatness as a theologian. The Hampden controversy belongs to the past, but the *Bampton Lectures* have a present value. Development is the sovereign conception of our modern thought, and our theology has taken a historical colour. The evolution of doctrine is one of the most living of modern theological problems, and it is this problem which is central in Hampden's volume. In a very real sense he may be called a prophet of coming tendencies. Investigation at the present time concerns itself increasingly with the attempt to estimate the influence upon Christianity of the varied environment in which it grew up. Hampden's demand for a greater simplicity of credal statement is echoed to-day from many quarters. It is not only that men have grown tired of logomachies, but rather that historical criticism has emphasized the distinction, which Hampden was never tired of enforcing, between truth as it is in the Bible, and the subsequent dogmatic forms in which it was clothed. Hampden had no intention to undermine Christian truth. He expressly states in the introduction to the second edition of the lectures that he leaves untouched the matter of Christian doctrine. But he saw, as his opponents did not, that theology could only remain a living science if theologians were willing to recognise that, while the original truths of revelation stand unaltered, the intellectual presentation of them must of necessity change with the changes of human thought and language.

The *University Sermons* are concerned almost entirely with a criticism of Tractarianism, and the Romanism with which, as Hampden saw, it had such close affinities. In his opinion, the chief danger which threatened the Church of England was the erection of tradition into an authority parallel to Scripture,

and destined quickly to supersede it, as it gathered to itself an increasing sanctity, and wrapped itself in the mystery of antiquity. He points out how different are the notions of authority in the Roman and Anglican Churches.[1] When we quit the age of the Apostles, we leave behind us, he says, the period of divine authority. All later developments are to be tested by Scripture, and not Scripture by them. They may be regarded as confirmations of the truth, but not as primary and fundamental evidence.[2] Insistence on the authority of tradition necessitates either a progressive interpretation of tradition, or the interposition of an arbiter whose decisions are final. Rome finds an arbiter in the Pope. Others fall back upon the authority of general councils. But why, asks Hampden, should conciliar verdicts be regarded as infallible?[3] The Apostolic Fathers he would use as valuable witnesses of the essence and spirit of the Gospels, but he cannot allow that they are accurate expositors of what is true or false in theological statement. The fact that there was considerable latitude in the early usage of theological terms is enough to prove that antiquity as such is no unimpeachable guarantee of truth.[4] Least of all in matters of ritual and ceremony is antiquity to be taken as an authority. He deprecates the importance attached by the Tractarian to ritual, on the ground that forms and ceremonies are no part of the essential faith of a Christian, and that an excessive use of ritual may foster a morbid sentimentality.[5] Newman's theory of doctrinal development receives some penetrating criticism.[6] In opposition to all theories of development, Hampden maintains that the Church possessed from the first the truth as completely as it does now.

The *University Sermons* are models of lucid statement, and testify abundantly to Hampden's orthodoxy. They prove his sincere attachment to the Church of England; but they prove more. They prove that, just as he distinguished between theology and religion, so he emphasized the independence of spiritual religion from the outward embodiments of worship.

[1] Sermon ix.; cp. also his *Lecture on Tradition*, 1839.
[2] Sermon ix.
[3] *Lecture on Tradition*, p. 30.
[4] In the *Bampton Lectures* he instances the use of "person," "nature," "substance."
[5] Sermon x.
[6] Sermons ix., xii., xiii.

Forms were things that changed and passed; but the living reality of Christian experience remained.

Of Thomas Arnold's work as an interpreter of Scripture I have written in a later chapter. It seemed to me to be the most natural method of procedure to discuss this side of his activity in connection with the story of the rise of Biblical criticism in England. Here I will only say that this is the sphere of his most abiding influence. He was more than a critic; he was a prophet and interpreter, filled with a deep reverence for the Bible, and conscious of the permanent value of its varied religious message. The study of the Bible he held to be the proper end of scientific theology, and the best instrument for such study, next to the enlightened conscience, a good general education, and a knowledge of history. The lack of such education among the English clergy, and the isolation of theology from the larger currents of thought, he perpetually lamented.

Arnold's liberalism, religious and political, was the liberalism of one whose whole soul was possessed by a vision of Christian unity. He was not a speculative theologian, nor, perhaps, a profound thinker; but he was a man, all of whose aims and ambitions were controlled by a fervent loyalty to Christ. To bring all life under the dominance of Christ, to sanctify all its activities, to make the spirit of Christian discipleship an active power throughout the entire range of individual and national existence, was his supreme object. He had an intense hatred of party-spirit in religion; the divisions among Christians pained him greatly. He felt that many of them could be removed, or, at any rate, could be treated as differences of opinion, not of principle.[1] His watchwords were — "Christianity without Sectarianism," "Comprehension without Compromise." In the striving after a uniformity of dogmatic belief, he saw nothing but a principle of separation,[2] though he would impose the test

[1] Cp. *Principles of Church Reform* (1833)—p. 272 of *Miscellaneous Works* (1845).

[2] Cp. Stanley's *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*, vol. i. p. 359, where, in a letter to Julius Hare, Arnold speaks of "the great philosophical and Christian truth, which seems to me the very truth of truths, that Christian unity and the perfection of Christ's Church are independent of theological articles of opinion; consisting in a certain moral state, and moral and religious affections, which have existed in good Christians of all ages and all communions, along with an infinitely varying proportion of truth and error."

of readiness to worship Christ on all who desired to be members of the enlarged national Church. He felt a difficulty about the admission of Unitarians to the Christian society, but was content, if they were willing to join in the worship of Christ, not to press them to define what they meant by calling Christ God. Conformity to the Liturgy he regarded as a better test than subscription to the Articles. Formulæ should not "serve as a test of any latent error," but should be as comprehensive as possible.[1]

As to the relation between the Church and the State, he held that the ideal of each fused with that of the other, and that the highest perfection of both involved an identity between them. Both Church and State, he writes, exist to promote happiness and improvement among men. Religious society has the higher knowledge of what true happiness is. Let that knowledge be imparted to civil society, and the aims of each will be, in fact as well as in intention, identical. A Christian State, he argues, ought to act on Christian principles. Its officers should regard themselves as being in a very real sense Christian ministers, and should have power, in the absence of the clergy, to administer the sacraments and read the services of public worship. Dissenters, if they would accept episcopal government, ought to be admitted within the national Church. He would have the clergy sitting in both houses of Parliament. He welcomed with all his soul anything which broke down the barrier between the clergy and the laity. The fatal obstacle to any such identity between Church and State as he desired he held to be the belief in a peculiar form of government existing in the Church *jure divino*, and therefore incapable of modification,[2] His own view was that the unity of the Church was a unity of principle, not of organisation. He valued highly the principle of an establishment, seeing in the existence of an established Church the only security for the presence throughout the land of an adequate body of well-educated men, "whose sole business is to do good of the highest kind."[3] Among the changes which he advocated,

[1] *Principles of Church Reform*—p. 285 of *Miscellaneous Works*.

[2] *The State and the Church*—p. 472 of *Miscellaneous Works*.

[3] For Arnold's views as to the relation of Church and State, cp. the following in *Miscellaneous Works*;—*Principles of Church Reform*; Letters to the *Sheffield Courant*, ii. and xii.; Letters to the *Hertford Reformer*, on "The State

as likely to make the Church more popular and efficient, were, an increase in the number of dioceses, the admission of laymen to greater administrative authority in matters ecclesiastical, more variety in our forms of worship, the use of churches on week-days, and the revival of an inferior order of deacons for the ministry, which he thought would provide a link between the clergy and the laity. All these proposals have, in our time, been adopted.

The pamphlet, *Principles of Church Reform*, created an immense sensation, but met with far more condemnation than approval. It is worth while to quote Arnold's own words in reply to the charge of indiscretion which was brought against him:

"I am quite ready to allow, that to publish such a pamphlet in 1840, or indeed at any period since 1834, would have been the height of indiscretion. But I wrote that pamphlet in 1833, when most men—myself among the number—had an exaggerated impression of the strength of the movement party, and of the changes which it was likely to effect. My pamphlet was written on the supposition—not implied but expressed repeatedly—that the Church Establishment was in extreme danger; and therefore I proposed remedies which, although I do still sincerely believe them to be in themselves right and good, yet would be manifestly chimerical, and to advise them might well be called indiscreet, had not the danger and alarm, as I supposed, been imminent. I mistook, undoubtedly, both the strength and intenseness of the movement, and the weakness of the party opposed to it; but I do not think that I was singular in my error—many persisted in it."[1]

Tractarianism was the object of his vehement scorn and hatred. He saw clearly that Apostolical Succession was the central doctrine of the system. In opposition to it, he argued that "bishops confer a *legal* qualification for the ministry, not a real one, whether natural or supernatural."[2] The Oxford Movement meant for him the erection of the clergy into a

and the Church" and "Church Establishments," 1838 and 1840. Also the following letters in the *Life and Correspondence*, Nos. 20, 40, 65, 97, 152, 168, 197, 216.

[1] *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 293.

[2] *Principles of Church Reform*—p. 329 of *Miscellaneous Works*; cp. also in *Life*, letter 130.

separate caste, and the abandonment of all which English Protestantism held dear. The Tractarian appeal to antiquity he felt to be essentially unhistorical, because it did not go back to the first century, but made the fourth the final standard of reference. It was, further, a contradiction of the teaching of the great Anglican divines, Hooker, Taylor, Bull, Pearson; nor could it be said that those who made the appeal were clear as to the nature or source of the authority which they invoked.[1] The hardest blow which he delivered against the Tractarians (the "Judaizers" of the nineteenth century) was the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, written to defend Hampden from Newman's attack.[2]

Arnold, as I have said, was not a speculative theologian. Early in life he felt difficulties over the doctrine of the Trinity,[3] and, though he was able to overcome them before his ordination, he remained to the end averse from attempts to go beyond the language of Scripture in defining the being of God, and regarded as presumptuous the definitions of the Athanasian Creed. The revelation of God in Christ completely satisfied him; he was not concerned to translate it into metaphysics. Hence arose his dislike of Articles of Religion which he felt presented truth in an abstract guise, and so robbed it of its living power. The same truth "embodied in prayers, or confessions, or even in catechisms, becomes more Christian, just in proportion as it is less theological."[4] He did not consider that his scheme for

[1] His views on Tractarianism may be found in the Introduction to the volume of sermons, *Christian Life, its Course, its Hindrances, and its Helps*, and in the Appendix to Sermon xi. of volume iii. of Sermons, where he discusses Priesthood. Also in the *Life and Correspondence*, Letters 63, 111, 115, 130, 134, 137, 232.

[2] The following is an extract from the article:—"The fanaticism of the English High Churchman has been the fanaticism of mere foolery. A dress, a ritual, a name, a ceremony;—a technical phraseology;—the superstition of a priesthood, without its power;—the form of episcopal government, without the substance;—a system imperfect and paralysed, not independent, not sovereign;—afraid to cast off the subjection against which it is perpetually murmuring. Such are the objects of High Church fanaticism—objects so pitiful, that, if gained ever so completely, they would make no man the wiser or the better,—they would lead to no good, intellectual, moral, or spiritual—to no effect, social or religious, except to the changing of sense into silliness, and holiness of heart and life into formality and hypocrisy."

[3] *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 22.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 317.

Church reform had any tendency toward latitudinarianism in belief. On the contrary, he thought that it would lead to greater unity and strictness in regard to the doctrines which he held to constitute the essence of the Gospel, doctrines, that is, which related to the disposition and dealings of God toward man, and man's consequent duties to God.[1] In revelation he did not look to find abstract theological truth, but rather lessons of practical conduct. He objected to the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, and wished to see the use of the Creed as a whole in public worship discarded.[2] Of subscription he wrote that all subscriptions "*must* be taken in their widest rather than their strictest sense, except on points where they were especially intended to be stringent, and to express the opposite of some suspected opinion."[3] He would allow any one to subscribe who was "in sympathy with the Church in its main faith and feelings."[4]

Leaving out of account the very important influence which Arnold exercised in promoting a more intelligent study of the Bible, we may say of him, that he lives in the story of the nineteenth century mainly because of his character. Newman's question, "but is *he* a Christian?" was an atrocious libel on a man whose whole life was an act of loyalty to Christ. Christianity for Arnold was, first and foremost, a way of life, a moral discipline. It was not given to him to revivify a theology, grown stale with convention, by deeper thought of the speculative order; the road which he trod was practical. But for many he did rekindle religion, by showing how the Christian spirit could be made to pervade the whole of life, and how the sectarian temper was a contradiction of the Gospel. He studiously avoided using the customary phraseology of religious circles or the shibboleths of ecclesiastical parties. These were for him marks of division. His aim was to unite Christians by bringing them face to face with the truth as it is in Christ.

The Noetic spirit of inquiry and historical research was active in two men, Thirlwall and Milman, who, though they were not members of the Oriel group, may fairly be classed with it. Arnold died in 1842; Whately in 1863; Thirlwall not

[1] *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 319.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 120.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 120.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 173.

till 1874, after an episcopate as Bishop of St. David's of thirty-four years. Much therefore of the history of Thirlwall's theological opinions belongs to a period later than that now under consideration. What concerns us here is his early liberalism, which entitles him, though he belonged to the sister University of Cambridge,[1] to be ranked with those Oxford theologians who were trying to effect a synthesis between traditional theology and the broader spirit of progress. Thirlwall's mind was cast in a wider mould than that of Whately, but between the two are marked resemblances. Both possessed the power of critical analysis, both made the same appeal to the dispassionate arbitrament of reason. But Thirlwall had in fuller degree the synoptic faculty. He could take in all sides of an argument, and hold the balance evenly between them. One has only to read his numerous Charges to see how immense was his learning, how remarkable his power of lucid presentation, how unflinching his impartiality. Those Charges, as his biographer points out, are really a comprehensive review, invaluable to any student of ecclesiastical history, of all the great questions which agitated the Church of England in the middle portion of the nineteenth century.[2] Educated for the profession of the law before he took holy orders, he brought to his work as a theologian that legal acumen and judicial temper which, had he remained in his original calling, would assuredly have placed him on the bench of judges.

He was still a layman when, in 1825, he published his translation of Schleiermacher's *Essay on St. Luke*. The fact that he dared in the existing state of opinion to translate the essay proved him to be fearless when others were painfully timid; while his Introduction to the essay showed that he had reached views as to the nature of inspiration which were an immense advance on the current traditional theory.[3] He was one of the very few English scholars of the day who possessed a knowledge of the German language and German theology. He had visited Germany, and had made the ac-

[1] He was assistant tutor at Trinity 1832–34, resigning his post because of some difficulties caused by his publication of a pamphlet on the admission of dissenters to the University.

[2] *Literary and Theological Remains of Connop Thirlwall*, 3 vols., 1877, edited by Perowne.

[3] For a fuller account of this book, cp. ch. x. of this volume.

quaintance of Bunsen. His interest in Biblical studies was increased by his friendship with Julius Hare, the co-translator with himself of Niebuhr's *History of Rome*. His intellectual sympathies were large and varied, but for Hegel he had a profound disliking and contempt. "One of the most impudent of all literary quacks" is the description which he gives of him.[1] He saw clearly enough that Hegelianism, though it might pose as such, and indeed was originally welcomed as such, was no friend to Christianity as the Church understood it. But the violent denunciation of the Hegelian system, which is repeated several times in his correspondence, makes us feel that he had failed to appreciate the debt which the philosophy of history owes to Hegel.

Thirlwall's attitude to Tractarianism was less hostile than that of the Oxford liberals. In the Charge delivered in 1842 he questions whether the doctrines advanced by the Tractarians are, as a whole, such as to place them outside the limits of the Church of England. The controversy, he points out, is an old one, and the comprehensive character of the Church rendered its recurrence inevitable. Later Charges deal with the development of Biblical criticism, and with the dangerous tendency, as he deemed it, of *Essays and Reviews*. But though he condemned the essayists, he never sought to check the free expression of opinion or the spirit of inquiry. He saw how fatal was the mistake which English theologians were making, when they tried to conceal from the public the results reached by criticism in Germany.[2]

With intellectual endowments very different from those of Whately, or Thirlwall, or Hampden, Henry Hart Milman may still be placed within the circle of the Noetic brotherhood, because of the spirit of historical criticism which animated him. He was not, perhaps, a historian of the first rank, yet the indefinable quality of genius clings to his historical writings. His powers were of the literary order. He had the gift of style and picturesque expression, and an imaginative sympathy which enabled him to call up and interpret a past epoch of history. His Bampton Lectures in 1827 gave no indication of

[1] *Letters Literary and Theological of Connop Thirlwall*, 1881, edited by Perowne and Stokes.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

the disturbance which he was to cause two years later in ecclesiastical circles.[1] They followed the lines of Paley's apologetic, and reached the orthodox conclusion that miracles are an essential part of Christianity, and cannot, with any show of reason, be removed from the New Testament narratives. In 1829, however, his *History of the Jews* appeared in three small volumes of the Family Library Series, and so great was the commotion aroused by them that the publisher had to suspend the issue of the book. Criticism to-day would endorse all that Milman said in this work; what were then startling conclusions are now commonplaces. But in the third decade of the century public opinion was not prepared for the application to the narratives of the Old Testament of the ordinary methods of historical criticism. Sacred history was regarded as something apart; it was held to be profanation to treat it as you would treat secular history. Milman suggested that a natural explanation might be found of many incidents in the Old Testament which tradition unquestioningly accepted as supernatural. For example, the angel who destroyed Sennacherib's host may have been a pestilential wind; Sodom and Gomorrah, built on a bituminous soil, may have perished in a natural conflagration. The story in Joshua of the sun and moon standing still was poetry, not fact. The Biblical numbers were obviously exaggerated, and Biblical chronology was untrustworthy. Milman's object, however, was not to destroy faith, but rather to quicken it by bringing the story of the Hebrew people "within the sphere of fact, rather than of pulpit convention."[2] His imaginative sympathy enabled him to portray with remarkable vividness the characters and scenes of the Old Testament. Here were living men and women of flesh and blood like our own. Here was a pulsing national life, full of instructive lessons for the world, but which could never be understood if the traditional view of inspiration continued. Milman was charged with denying the supernatural and minimising revelation. The charge was true to this extent, that it was his aim to distinguish between what was essential in religion and what was local and temporary. Current orthodoxy

[1] The title was *The Character and Conduct of the Apostles Considered as Evidence of Christianity.*

[2] Cp. Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought in Britain*, p. 82.

refused to make that distinction, and so found itself in conflict with historical criticism. But Milman never impugned the spiritual greatness of the Bible, or denied that the religious message of its writers was due to inspiration. His was no naturalistic creed. But while his opponents pinned their faith to tradition, Milman was filled with the spirit of inquiry, and saw that criticism had reached results which were fatal to the unthinking orthodoxy of the day. The *History of Latin Christianity* was his greatest achievement. The conclusion of it fitly expresses his philosophy of faith. He speaks of the passing away of dogmatic systems, and of the "wider interpretation" of parts of the Bible which will have to be made, if its teaching is to be harmonised with new knowledge and the conclusions of science; but clings to the conviction that "the primal and indefeasible truths of Christianity" will abide, and that, as humanity progresses, its understanding of the truth, as it is in Christ, will become clearer and fuller.

A common ideal, then, inspired all the members of this group. They stood for freedom of inquiry and a progressive theology. They brought historical criticism to bear upon traditional orthodoxy, and in particular upon current beliefs relating to the Bible. They wished to disentangle the essence of Christianity from its local and temporary setting. They were a party of movement and reform, and exercised a strong, general, liberalising influence. Tractarianism for the moment seemed to carry all before it, but the triumph of the forces of reaction was short-lived. The seed sown by these men had germinated, and was later to produce an abundant harvest. From the vantage-ground of to-day we can look back on their work, and hail them as prophets of the coming change which was to revolutionise theology.

CHAPTER VII

SPIRITUAL FORCES OF THE CENTURY (1)

The Historical Method

Among the new influences which were to shape the thought of the nineteenth century, the foremost place must be given to the historical method, of which the comparative method may be regarded as a branch. The eighteenth century witnessed the birth of this method at the hands of Lessing and Herder, but it was the following century which fashioned it into a powerful instrument of critical research, and showed how by its aid the long story of humanity's development might be rendered more intelligible.

I have tried at the end of this section to distinguish some of the different meanings which the phrase "historical method" may convey. Meanwhile, speaking generally, we may describe the method as genetic. It seeks to understand the subject under investigation by tracing out its history. It recognises that the present carries within itself whatever was vital in the past, and will in its turn be the parent of the future. Its outlook is organic. The hiatus, the sharp interval, it cannot tolerate. Its thought is of continuity, living connection, slow transformation of one stage of a process into the next. It wishes to discover in the field of history the connection of cause and effect. It conceives of any given society as an organism, with its own laws of growth which it aims at elucidating. It seeks to penetrate to the fundamental principles of sociological change. The early historian, Herodotus for example, was a literary artist rather than a scientific investigator. He gave you a series of pictures or descriptions of events, adding to them certain moral and philosophical reflections, often through the medium of imaginary speeches put into the mouths of his chief characters; but he never realised either the complexity or depth of the forces which moulded

the life of a society. This deeper insight could come only with increased knowledge, such as the primitive historian had no means of obtaining, and with the reflection which such knowledge called forth.

The historical method, then, refuses to treat any event in isolation. Each wins significance from, and is to be explained by, its relation to other events. But the search for continuity reveals the vastness of the interconnection. Existence forms one whole, and the ideal for knowledge presents itself as the ideal of a system in which all the parts shall be so related as to form a unity. For example, the history of any single nation must be studied in relation to the history of all other nations; and thus is born the thought of universal history. The development is of humanity as a whole, whose story stretches far back into a dimly discerned past, and looks forward into a future which none can measure. This conception of the unity of mankind began to come into prominence in the latter half of the eighteenth century; and with it arose the problem of showing how all the manifold varieties of human culture and civilisation were correlated expressions of the one underlying and growing spirit of humanity.

The historical method arose in reaction against the abstract and artificial manner of writing history prevalent in the eighteenth century. The rationalism of that age was content to move lightly over the surface of events, without caring to explore the deeper causes of change and movement. The writing of history became a matter of the use of abstract formulæ, or shallow generalisations. Of a true, sympathetic feeling for the past there was little or none; the past, in fact, was often frankly despised. But the historical method revived the feeling for the past, though it was itself in part created by it. Men began to realise that the past was not entirely past, but was active in a present which had absorbed all that was living in it. A regressive, historical sympathy henceforward became part of the necessary equipment of the historian.

As the method grew, its character underwent a change. It became less philosophical, and more truly historical. It began to acquire the temper of exact research. One of Lessing's chief interests was the philosophy of history. He made it clear, once and for all, that, if history is to be really understood,

there must be a philosophy of history. But a philosophical insight into the significance of history requires as its basis the work of the scholar and researcher. There must be the patient analysis of detail, the collecting of facts, the recovery of the past in its living interest and incident, before the larger generalisation can be effective. Now it so happened that in Germany, just when the historical method was being adopted, a brilliant epoch of speculative philosophy was in full development. Speculation carried all before it. Theory tended to leave fact behind. True historical research had difficulty in asserting itself. Particularly noticeable was the influence of speculation in theology, when the historical facts of Christianity were in danger of being either altogether neglected or translated into ideas. But the needed reaction came. The destructive criticism of Strauss set men upon the task of recovering the historical Christ. Theology became historical. A genuine scientific criticism was applied to the documents of Christianity. The investigator began to understand more clearly the scope and value of the method which he was employing. Every department of inquiry felt the impulse of the new movement. The growth of the historical spirit meant the birth and rapid development of the historical sciences dealing with man. Anthropology, ethics, comparative religion, racial psychology, the study of language, all took on a historical colouring, and yielded a rich harvest of results. The most important effect of the method upon theology has been the creation of the science of Biblical criticism, which has profoundly modified our conceptions of revelation and inspiration, and has given a new meaning to the authority of Scripture. It is probably here that the method has most influenced the public mind. But it has also, because it is a genetic method, led men to investigate the origin and development of the whole Christian system. Ecclesiastical organisations, institutions, ritual, doctrine, all have had a history which must be discovered if their significance is to be understood. What was primitive Christianity? How much colour did the religion take from the successive environments in which it grew up? Has all the growth of Christianity been sound, or are there elements in it which should be discarded? That type of question at once emerges as a result of the use of this method. For the method is, by its very nature, one

of criticism. It involves a criticism of the present in the light of the past, and of the past in the light of the present. It is something more than a method of mere description. The search into the past of any doctrine or institution is undertaken not merely in order that the stages of their development may be set out in their temporal sequence, but in order that their meaning may be made clear through their history. The results reached by an investigation into the past history of a belief are used, and must inevitably be used, to test the validity of the belief. For example, if the historian investigates the history of the doctrine of the Real Presence in the eucharist, his work will have two results. It will show what various views have been held in the past, or are held in the present, about the belief; and it will help us to-day to decide what meaning we ought to attach to the belief, and whether a given view has justification or not. The two processes—the descriptive and the critical—differ in kind, but they are necessarily associated in our minds. The one furnishes materials for the other. The history of any development carries with it a criticism of the development.[1]

Much still remains for the historical method to do in the field of Christian theology—in the fuller discovery, for example, of the backgrounds, Jewish and pagan, against which Christianity appeared; in the investigation of documentary sources and of the early developments of ecclesiastical organisations; in the determination of the part played by non-Christian thought in the formation of Christian doctrine. The conflict is not yet over between the claims of the method and the spirit of dogmatism, which would exempt from criticism certain theological areas, or canonise certain centuries of Church life and thought, as supplying for all time the standard to which doctrine and organisation must conform. But the past triumphs of the method are the surest proof of its ultimate success. The spirit of a true historical criticism, once aroused, can never be suppressed.

It is important to point out how the method affects the notion of authority. The conception underlying the method

[1] My point is, that, though a valid logical distinction may be made between an inquiry into origins and an inquiry into meaning, it is a mistake to treat the historical method as if it were one of pure description only.

is that of organic development, in which the past is ever being taken up into, and transcended by, the present. This is equivalent to saying that the present must always be the critic of the past, and that the past can never be imposed upon the present as an authoritative arbiter or standard. The historical method recognises the principle of authority, but in the form of the authority of an organic reason, whose verdicts are themselves constantly liable to revision in the light of growing knowledge and experience. The authority of the dictator, of the Papal *ipse dixit*, of the Church Council, regarded as an independent principle, falls to the ground before the claims of the historical method. Its place is taken by the conception of the authority of history itself—an authority not absolute or final, but progressive, and limited by the immanent criticism which the movement of events constantly furnishes.

At one point the method early came into collision with theology. Its claim to interpret history causally and genetically implies the abandonment of the customary antithesis between the natural and the supernatural. The scientific historian feels that he is untrue to his ideal if he excludes any part of history from the operation of the natural forces which govern all historical movements. Traditional theology singled out a particular race and country, and asserted that here was a sphere in which the divine activity worked supernaturally by miracle or special intervention, and that only by conceding this could you explain the history of the Jews or their peculiar religious achievement. But religion for the historical method is, equally with art or poetry, an expression of the common spirit and character of the race, and must be interpreted by reference to the general conditions, physical, moral, social, political, under which the race developed. Exclude all thought of God, and then all becomes natural. Include God, with Lessing, and then all becomes supernatural. The demand, in other words, is for a self-contained whole, developing by its own inherent powers, and the rejection of the hypothesis of an intermittent divine agency in the background, whose operation could always be invoked to explain something which seemed inexplicable by natural causes. The historical method, as an instrument of strict scientific research, can come to no terms with the belief in an irregular or occasional supernatural activity. It is a problem for philo-

sophy whether any reconciliation is possible between theology and the method in this regard.

The method, inspired as we have seen, by the idea of continuity, seeks to bind past and present into one. The unity of mankind it conceives as a developing unity. In the thought of evolution it finds the principle which enables it to link together phases of human history which at first sight seem to have little connection with each other, and to bridge the gap which separates primitive from modern civilisation. The story of humanity is read as a process in which, though not without movements of retrogression, there is a gradual passage to richer and fuller life. The conception of evolution had established itself before it received such abundant illustration in biology at the hands of Darwin. Goethe and Schelling had applied it to science, and it was the master-thought of the whole Hegelian philosophy. But it was immensely reinforced when, after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, it became the leading category of scientific research. This reinforcement was communicated to the historical method which, being itself a genetic method, could not but gain from every extension of the principle of development. The historical method made the study of history scientific; and the sciences themselves, learning from the method, applied the thought of evolution to their own past history. Scientific and historical investigation, informed by the common conception of development, followed parallel paths. The intellectual record of the nineteenth century is one of the growing sovereignty of the idea of evolution.

The historical method however, valuable though it is as an instrument of research, is subject in its use to several limitations. Some mention must be made of these in order that we may more clearly understand the nature of the method and its bearing upon the central problem of Christian theology. In the first place, then, each department of historical inquiry requires its own special application of the method. Development is a comprehensive term which covers many diverse processes. Just as evolution in history is not to be explained by the same categories which explain evolution in plant or animal life, so within the sphere of history proper the different fields of human activity will need the application of different principles of interpretation. In the second place, we

are dealing in history with free, self-conscious beings, capable of forming ideals which they seek to realise. Now the question arises whether the historical method can explain the origin and presence of ideals. The method, as usually understood, concerns itself with tracing the development of external factors and conditions. It seeks to show how the present has grown out of the past; how out of the simple, as it is deemed to be, the complex has arisen. But the action at every stage of the process of free, self-conscious beings, who frame the ideals which, at any rate in part, govern the development of the process, introduces a factor which is not entirely amenable to strict scientific treatment. Personality, with all that it implies, can never be regarded as you would regard outward conditions of environment. Ideals cannot be explained solely as the product of external circumstances. They are, at least in some degree, a spontaneous creation of the human spirit. The claim, therefore, of the historical method to explain by tracing backward to antecedent conditions is one which calls for careful consideration. Philosophy, confronted with the claim, would qualify it in three respects. It would deny that the higher can be explained by the lower, the complex by the simple. In point of time, what seems the simple may have preceded the complex. Unicellular organisms appeared upon the scene long before the vertebrates; the religion of the savage preceded the more developed faith of civilised man. But just because the higher has grown out of the lower, the lower must have contained in itself potentially all that has developed from it. What for history is simple, for philosophy is complex. In so far, therefore, as the ideal of the historical method is to explain the higher by the lower which has preceded it in point of time, philosophy would say that such an ideal fails to do justice to the real meaning of a development. The procedure should rather be inverted. The lower should be interpreted in the light of the higher into which it has grown, and in which it finds its true significance. Secondly, philosophy would deny that the historical method can offer any explanation of a process taken as a whole. By the help of the method, the historian can trace out the threads of connection between past and present; but of the significance of the total process, its meaning and value for thought, he can give no account. The "how" of the process

he can in part explain, but not the "why." To trace out, for example, the history of religion, while it enables us to understand the different forms which religion has taken and reveals the universality of religion in the story of mankind, does not satisfy the philosopher who wants to know what value he is to attach to the religious attitude in his final interpretation of reality. The philosophical problem lies deeper down than the historical, and remains to be answered after the historian has done his work. Thirdly, as has already been pointed out, philosophy would deny that the historical method can give any satisfactory account of the presence of ideals in history, except by voiding personality of its meaning and treating a person as being on the same level with an external force or factor.

The importance of these considerations for theology is clear. The central problem in Christian theology is that of the creative Personality of Christ. How is He to be explained? Can He be explained in terms of the antecedent forces of Jewish history? Is not His personal influence the most important factor in the historical development of Christianity? This was the problem which, as we shall see later, baffled Hegel and Strauss. It was Schleiermacher's fuller appreciation of it which makes his theology more satisfying than that of his rivals. The historical method rediscovered the historical Christ, but the rediscovery inevitably sets us thinking about the limitations of the method.

This brief discussion suggests the desirability of trying, by way of summary and conclusion, to analyse in further detail the nature of the historical method. Under the common name are included operations which differ both in character and aim; and the value which we attach to the method will depend upon the width or narrowness of our view of it.

(*a*) The method may be regarded, first of all, as an instrument of scholarship and critical research. As such it has revolutionised learning. It has created the modern sciences of grammar and philology, has taught us how to make use of sources and documents, has provided, in a word, the critical apparatus necessary for the understanding of any past period of history or literature. Its triumphs in this field have been immense, particularly in the matter of Biblical study.

(*b*) But such critical and analytical labour is merely preliminary. If the past is to be recovered, more is needed than the temper of the pure researcher. An attempt must be made to appreciate the past, to revive its moving and concrete life. Here the personal quality of sympathetic imagination comes into play. Insight, vision, the power of interpretation are needed, before the empty stage of the past can be peopled once more with living forms. The method here becomes one of sympathetic, personal appreciation, and imaginative reconstruction. The historian has to reproduce for the thought of the present the spirit of the past, its conscious and unconscious strivings. He has to make it live again before the eyes of his contemporaries.

(*c*) Thirdly, the method may be regarded as a method of causal explanation, which traces out the links which bind past and present together, and discovers the nature of the forces which, operating through the past, have made the present what it is. Process and continuity are here the leading ideas in the mind of the historian. But at this point an opposition reveals itself among those who use the method. On the one hand, the claim is made, that, since the later stages of a process have developed out of the earlier, it is the earlier which must supply the standard for interpreting the process. The complex must be reduced to the simple, the whole resolved into its elements. On the other hand is the counter-claim, that in any process of growth we must look to the end, and not to the beginning, to what the growing thing has become, not to what it started from, for an explanation of the process. In the former case the method is one of analysis and abstraction; in the latter, of synthesis and concretion. In the former the method has affinity with the methods of physical science; in the latter with that of philosophy. Now both methods may truly be regarded as parts of the historical method. It is certainly possible, and perhaps it is customary, to treat the historical method merely as a method of analysis into beggarly elements, and to place all your emphasis upon it as an instrument of critical and scholarly research. But such a treatment overlooks the deeper significance of the method, and robs it of much of its value. The creators of the method, Lessing and Herder, used it as a method for the construction of the philo-

sophy of history. Both would have said, though Lessing certainly with greater emphasis, that, in tracing back a development to its germ, the fullness of its later stages must be taken as the standard by which the earlier stages are to be interpreted. Lessing's use of the method, in other words, is not open to the criticisms which philosophy must pass upon the method in its narrower meaning.

(*d*) The method, then, in its most comprehensive aspect, is a historico-philosophical method, involving ideal elements of constructive thought and imagination. It runs up into the philosophy of history. It becomes teleological and interpretative. It seeks to determine the inner meaning of history, to find the goal towards which history moves, to bind past and present into a living unity of continuous growth, and discover the immanent reason and purpose of the whole. History, as we understand it to-day, is something more than a chronological table of events. It is a study of laws, forces, tendencies, personalities, and rests upon the assumption that between past and present there is living continuity. Any historian who sets out to investigate a past epoch, with this larger ideal of investigation before him, will find, if he examines the implications of the historical method, that it inevitably involves philosophical elements.

This account of the method is, I am aware, in sharp opposition to the claims put forward to-day by a powerful school of historical research to which a purely objective ideal commends itself. We may describe their aim by saying that they would get rid of the personal equation, and eliminate from their treatment of history all philosophical elements. They would carry over into historical study the spirit of exact, scientific research. Thus their object in studying any past epoch is to let the past be its own interpreter. They seek to free themselves from any influence which the standards or thought of the present may exercise, and to approach the past with a purely receptive mind. The unity of history is forgotten; we are given instead a series of epochs, each of which the historian endeavours to set before us by itself in independence. Such an ideal of historical research is open to two classes of objections. In the first place, an attitude of pure objectivity is impossible to attain. The eye sees in the

past what it brings with it to see; no historian can ever free himself entirely from the influence of subjective elements, as is proved by the presence of very different interpretations of the same period. Again, the historian must be in possession of some standards of valuation. His picture of the past is necessarily coloured by these standards; his grouping of events implies the constant use of them. Once more, the very instrument by which he pictures for us the life of the past, the sympathetic imagination, is subjective through and through. In the second place, the ideal of a purely objective study voids not only personality, but all history of its meaning. Why do we study history? Not merely that we may learn what happened in the past in its chronological sequence, but that we may understand the life and temper of our own time. A study of the past helps us to interpret the meaning of the present. It is the meaning, the spiritual significance, of our own age, which we wish to master. If the present without the past can afford insufficient material for an understanding of ourselves and our surroundings, it is no less true that the past, unless it be interpreted by the present, is a mere collection of happenings. The deeper life of the present must inevitably be weakened if history is treated as the objective school would treat it, and if no attempt is made to grasp the unity of the whole historical process. But where this attempt is made, it will be found impossible to free the historical method from philosophical implications.[1]

The historical method, as an organic method, seeks not only to discover tendencies, but the co-operation and fusion of tendencies, the consilience of factors, the lines of convergence. It seeks to reflect in its own operation the oneness and interrelationships of humanity. An organism is a living and growing unity, in which the whole may be said to be present in each of the parts, and in which each part is vitally connected with all the others; which develops as a whole, and suggests the operation of an immanent purpose. The historical method strives to reproduce in its own movement something of the unity and concreteness of living growth. In particular (and for theology this is important) it strives to rise above any narrowly conceived antithesis of sacred and secular, natural

[1] Cp. Eucken's *Main Current of Modern Thought*, D. 2.

and supernatural. The limited validity for certain purposes of such oppositions it may recognise, but its constant aim is to discover the higher unity in which they are overcome by being transcended.

(*e*) Finally it must be remembered that the historical method is itself a growing method which is destined, as it perfects itself, to become increasingly powerful. Reference has already been made to the way in which the method, in opposition to the too speculative treatment of history by the philosophers, became critical, scholarly, comparative. The positive results reached by this more exact research have not only been immense in amount, but have reacted upon the method itself, helping it to make its aim clearer, and furnishing it with fresh instruments of discovery. That improvement will continue. In addition, the method must gain from every advance made in our interpretation of the idea of evolution. The more we can make plain what development implies, the more clearly will the historian understand the meaning of process in history. The more will he learn to take what I have called an organic point of view; recognising the living interaction of all the factors which make up history, and striving in his interpretation of any historical movement to do justice to their interconnection. A vision of unity gave birth to the method; a vision of unity is the ideal which still inspires it.

Romanticism

Newman, in the *Apologia*, when describing the sources of the Oxford Movement, speaks of "a spirit afloat" as the background of the religious revival. This spirit was Romanticism in the larger meaning of the term. It influenced many sides of human activity. Learning, philosophy, art, criticism, literature, religion, all came under the spell of the new impulse, and blossomed into fresh life. Now a movement so complex as Romanticism cannot be described in a sentence. It includes tendencies very different in scope and character, some of which had important collateral results in branches of inquiry which at first sight seem to have little direct connection with the movement. For our present purpose, however, it is unnecessary to attempt any full analysis of Romanticism, or any

description of its course. We are concerned only with the wider bearings of the movement, and with its effect upon English theology.

For what, then, does Romanticism stand? In its origin it was a reaction against the over-dominance of classical standards in literature and art, and a protest against the intellectualism and rationalism of the eighteenth century. It was a plea for life, for freedom, for the claims of feeling and the spiritual nature. Little place was found in rationalism for sentiment, passion, emotion, or the spontaneity of the creative imagination. Human life was measured by intellectual standards; logic reigned supreme. The temper of the eighteenth century, however, was not entirely rationalistic. The Pietists in Germany, and the leaders of the religious revival in England, Wesley and Whitefield, were emphasizing the importance of the part played by feeling in religion, and unquestionably helped to prepare the way for a general recognition that life is larger than intellect. But the movement, in its main advance, came not from religion, but from literature and philosophy. Once started on its career, it progressed with an impetus which nothing could withstand.

We may distinguish in Romanticism the following notes:—

(*a*) It recognised the depth and largeness of human nature. Man, it taught, was not simply an intellectual being, but a creature of passion and emotion, of deep-seated instincts and forces, which help to govern him, even though he is not always aware of their presence. It was thus a protest against the prevailing tendency to starve half of human nature. In particular, it showed how in feeling fresh springs were ever welling up for the reanimation of the life of society and the individual. Of primary importance, in this connection, was the wider meaning which it gave to the term *reason*. Reason was not to be identified with mere reasoning, the logical or argumentative faculty. It was something larger—a creative and unifying activity. It stood for man in the wholeness of his capacities and the oneness of his growth. It was to be distinguished from the narrower understanding. It represented the total movement of the personality. It drew the material for its constructive efforts from the whole range of human experience.

(*b*) Romanticism may be called the revival of the spirit of wonder, and of the appreciation of the element of mystery in man and nature. It gave birth to the sense of the infinite, to the vision of far horizons, of "that untravelled world" whose margin ever recedes as we approach it. In the inner circle of the Romantics this sense of mystery showed itself in two forms; in a deliberate use of the element of the supernatural to heighten the effect of a situation, and to create the emotions of awe, terror, amazement; and in the emphasis placed upon the sadness and melancholy of life. The stirrings within the human breast of a vague discontent, the feeling of the weariness of existence, the sighing for the unattainable, the sense of burden and despair, of life's pain and grief—it was to themes such as these, that so many of the writers of the school gave prominence. On the other hand, as in Wordsworth, it struck the note of joy and calm, born of the recognition that human life is bosomed in the life of an Eternal Spirit of perfection. But everywhere, whether the appeal is made to the sadness or the joyousness of life, there is in romantic writing the sense of mystery, of spiritual import, of the dim backgrounds of human existence. And in some members of the school this sense of mystery passed into mysticism, and generated a temper which found delight in what was vague and indefinite.

(*c*) Romanticism laid stress upon the importance of the imagination. Reason and imagination were shown going hand in hand in their creative task. In the more advanced representatives of the movement imagination degenerated into the play of individual caprice and fancy, and tended to run riot in mere subjectivity. But its best efforts were soberer, and were often directed to a reconstruction of the past. To recover the life of the past, to bring it before the eyes and minds of men in all its incident and movement, was one of the prime objects of the romantic writers. In Germany they were aided in the achievement of this aim by the pressure of political events. The necessity of breaking the power of Napoleon, and the struggle for independence which ensued, helped to make Germany a nation, and to create the feeling of nationality. And with the birth of this feeling came the desire to investigate the past of the nation, and to understand its place and power

in the world. But imagination alone could not recover a forgotten past. Knowledge, criticism, exact investigation were also needed; and thus the scholar and researcher began their labours. Here Romanticism links itself with the historical and comparative methods; and all the sciences which deal with man, his speech, religion, literature, customs, start upon their fruitful career.

Among the attractive treasures of the past was primitive poetry, the ballad, the folk-song, the lays of the soil and hearth. Herder was the first in Germany to explore this rich mine. The movement had begun in England by the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* and Macpherson's *Ossian*, both of which books influenced Herder. But Herder was the first to interpret the meaning of this primitive poetry, and to show its significance for thought. He saw that here you had the spontaneous utterance of a nation's life in its earliest stages, before it had become staled by convention; and that its mythology, which was frequently expressed in poetical form, contained the key to many of the later problems connected with the nation's religious life. It was an easy and natural step to pass from the investigation of the past of a single nation to the investigation of the pasts of other nations, from the *Niebelungenlied* to the Sagas of the North, and to the hitherto unexplored poetry of India and the East.[1] Whole new worlds were thus opened for discovery; and the study of primitive poetry widened into a study of the total life of early humanity.

One epoch in the past, the Middle Ages, commanded special attention both in Germany and England. The rich life of mediævalism provided Scott with much of the material which his genius so marvellously used in his historical novels. This interest in the Middle Ages had, as will be seen, important consequences for English theology. In Germany Romanticism came into closer relation with religion and theology than was the case in England. In both countries the stream of religious revival set in the direction of Rome, but the English Romantics were not so definitely interested in the religious

[1] Sir William Jones (1746–1794) was a pioneer in making known the thought of the East. He founded the Asiatic Society. A most important work was done also by F. Schlegel in his *Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808).

aspect of mediævalism as were such men as Tieck, Novalis, and F. Schlegel.

A further point in connection with the romantic revival of the past must be mentioned. A tendency grew up, in some quarters, to imitate the past; not merely by an imaginative sympathy to recover its life, but to copy it with slavish fidelity. We shall discuss this tendency later in its bearing upon the development of theology in England. All that need be said now is, that any attempt to put back the clock of history in this way is doomed to failure. The past does, indeed, yield materials for the present, but the present must use them freely for its own purposes, exercising the right of rejection as well as that of assimilation. The attempt to ape the past is but an irrational fancy of men who have lost the sense of what historical development means.

(*d*) Another note of Romanticism is the creation of a sense of sympathy between man and nature. We can trace in English poetry the gradual rise of a new feeling for nature from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The method of conventional description is abandoned. Its place is taken by an increasing appreciation of external beauty, and a recognition of the spiritual ties which bind man and nature together. In the poetry of Wordsworth this recognition receives its fullest expression. For him nature is clothed with a religious significance. She is the home of the same Spirit who has not left Himself without witness in the human heart. Her beauty is a spiritual beauty. Even in her most common objects the seeing eye can trace a deep mystery and suggestiveness. We may say generally of romantic poetry, that it ceased to follow the fashion of treating nature as a mere accessory or background of external ornament to the life of man, but gave her a life of her own, and thought of that life as flowing out upon, and mixing with, human life. In Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, for example, the sea is something far more than a mere setting to the story. The sea is alive, and its life passes into the lives of the men who sail upon it. This treatment of nature by Romanticism is of immense importance. It was part of a larger movement which, beginning in the eighteenth century, and gathering force in the nineteenth, was to bind man to nature with the closest

ties. Herder was insisting that the key to the historical development of mankind is to be found in the influence of physical surroundings. Schelling's *Philosophy of Nature* was a protest against treating man apart from nature. All existence, he taught, forms one whole: man is the crowning term of a long ascent, and cannot be understood except in relation to the whole.

Finally, the biological doctrine of evolution enforced the same lesson, and showed that, whatever may be man's peculiar spiritual endowment, his physical nature looks back to an ancestry which begins with the dawn of life. The significance of this affinity between man and nature was interpreted in opposing ways. On the one hand, Naturalism reduced man to the level of nature, despiritualising him, and explaining him in terms of molecular process. On the other hand, Idealism insisted that the meaning of evolution was to be found in its final product. Spiritual man could not have developed from a merely material nature. Nature, therefore, must be read in terms of spirit. No issue in the whole thought of the nineteenth century is of more importance than this struggle between Naturalism and Idealism. And though the romantic treatment of nature is capable of, and in fact often implied, a pantheistic interpretation, we may still fairly regard it as a valuable contribution to a philosophy which finds in mind and spirit the true significance of life and its development.

The influence of Romanticism upon English theology is considered in later chapters of this volume, in those, for example, which deal with Coleridge and the Oxford Movement. Here I merely indicate in brief outline some of the directions in which that influence worked.

Though, as will be seen later, there was that in Tractarianism which was in conflict with the essential spirit of Romanticism, there was also in the two movements much which was akin. The romantic temper, with its sense of mystery, lent itself naturally to sacramentalism in theology. The growth of ritualism in the Church of England was certainly in part an outcome of the romantic love of colour, movement, pageantry. To these influences must be added the awakening of interest in the past which characterised Romanticism and is clearly reflected in the Oxford Movement. It is in this movement

that the most obvious effects of Romanticism upon theology may be seen. But the most obvious influence is not always the most significant or abiding. In two other directions Romanticism worked a deeper change in English theology.

In the first place, the study of religious psychology received from the movement an impetus which brought to it an entirely new life. Romanticism, as we have said, opened up a wider vision of human nature, revealed the presence within man of deep-seated instincts and aspirations, and showed that emotion played an important part in the conduct of life. Among the original constituents of human nature was found the instinct for religion. It made its presence felt from the first. It helped to create the mythology of primitive poetry. Man, ever since he had been man, had been feeling after God. Religion was proved to be natural to him; it could not be explained as due to the artifice of power-loving priests. The religion made the priests, not the priests the religion. To trace the development of this primitive and universal factor in human nature became a study of the highest interest and importance. Feeling and emotion, again, were emphasized by the Romantics. This led on to fresh inquiry into the nature of faith, and into the parts played by feeling and reason respectively in the formation of belief. Newman and Ward, whatever may be thought of the logic of their argument, made an important contribution to the psychology of religion. The *Grammar of Assent* was a fruit of that rediscovery of the inner life which Romanticism helped to effect. All through the nineteenth century can be traced a growing interest in the subject. Coleridge, after he had broken away from his early faith in empiricism and the associationism of the Hartley school, preached the doctrine that man's spirit was the meeting-point of the divine and human, and had about it depths which no sensationalist philosophy could sound. Carlyle, Julius Hare, Maurice, taught a similar gospel. Each was concerned to show that the religious life of man was something profounder and more complex than the rationalism of the preceding century had imagined it to be. The impulse thus given toward the discovery of a truer psychology of religion has persisted, and to-day there are few inquiries of more generally acknowledged interest; while most of those who have a right to speak upon the matter will be

ready to admit that religion is native to man, and that the verdict of religious experience is entitled to a respectful hearing in any attempt to construct a final philosophy of existence.

In a second direction Romanticism has permanently influenced theology. It has, working here together with the historical method, called into being a new apologetic. The apologetic of the last half of the eighteenth century, and of the earlier years of the nineteenth, was narrowly evidential. The standing arguments were those from miracle and prophecy, or from the trustworthiness of the New Testament writers, as proved by their readiness to die for their beliefs. Elaborate schemes were drawn up in defence of Christianity. They were based upon a false theory of the inspiration of the Bible, were often dry and technical, requiring for their appreciation a detailed knowledge of the scriptural narratives. It was an apologetic which lacked a spiritual appeal. The newer apologetic, which, after it had received its initial impulse from Coleridge, gradually gathered force in England in the nineteenth century, was very different in aim and method. It found in Christianity a message for the whole nature of man. The appeal to human needs and their satisfaction in Christ became a dominant feature of apologetic writings. The beginnings of this change in the temper of the apologists may be found, for example, in such a book as Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme*.[1]

The appeal which Chateaubriand makes to feeling and emotion is over-emphasized, and the apology is put forth in the interests of Roman Catholicism. But the writer recognises that the religious instinct is a fundamental part of man's being, and that his whole nature reaches out after some abiding spiritual satisfaction.

The argument from prophecy, or, as we should rather say, from prophecy as detailed prediction, recedes into the background when Biblical criticism begins to show the true character of the prophet's work. Miracles are no longer regarded as the main evidence for the truth of Christianity. The greatest miracle of all is seen to be the Person of Christ, whose claim to be Way, Truth, and Life has been justified in the continuous experience of the Christian consciousness.

[1] Cp. *The Romantic Revolt*, by C. E. Vaughan, pp. 424–426.

Another characteristic of the new apologetic was its conception of Christianity as the completion of all the partial revelations which had preceded it. The thought of a progressive movement culminating in Christianity was most directly derived from the historical and comparative methods; but Romanticism helped to bring about the change, by awakening an interest in the past, and so leading men to investigate the early developments of religion. The apologist to-day no longer views Christianity in isolation. In the conception of a gradual revelation he finds a constructive principle of the profoundest significance which enables him, while he maintains the uniqueness of Christianity, to relate it to other faiths. Modern apologetic, then, lays a double stress upon the universality of Christianity. It sees in it the consummation of earlier and less perfect faiths; and, passing behind its local and temporary expressions, emphasizes those elements in its teaching which are universal in their range, and concern the common wants and aspirations of the human heart.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUAL FORCES OF THE CENTURY (2)

Physical Science

The sense of community in intellectual interests which now prevails in all civilised countries is, in no small degree, the creation of physical science. The triumphs which science has achieved are due to the use of exact methods of research. Such methods, by their very nature, leave no scope for the influence of those peculiarly personal or national modes of thought which inevitably colour the rise of a literature or a philosophy. A discovery made in one laboratory can be immediately tested in all other laboratories; while the practical results of applied science upon human life and its amelioration are available for the whole world. In science, more than in any other field of inquiry, exists the feeling of brotherhood and co-operation in a common task.

In the early years of the nineteenth century scientific research was more organised on the Continent than was the case in England. There was nothing in England, till the formation in 1830 of the British Association, to correspond to the French Academy; and our universities were not so quick as those in Germany to recognise the claim of science to a place in the established curriculum of studies. Scientific thought up to the year 1830 looked to France as its natural home. The influence of the French mathematicians and naturalists was wide-spread and enduring. None called in question their title to supremacy.[1] This does not mean that England lagged behind the rest of the world in scientific discovery. She was, on the contrary, in the van of the advance; but what was achieved here was achieved by the efforts of individuals, working for the most part alone, and without official support or encouragement.

[1] Cp. Merz's *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 751.

The closing years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth saw the foundations securely laid of almost every branch of physical science. The principles of Newton's teaching received their first thorough and systematic application when Laplace published between 1799 and 1825 his *Mécanique Céleste.* Comparative anatomy took organised shape under the hands of Cuvier. In 1803 Dalton propounded the atomic theory, having in the previous year enunciated the law of the expansion of gaseous fluids. Thomas Young in 1801 showed the undulatory character of light, and Davy began his discoveries in electro-chemistry. Lamarck was proving himself a prophet of the doctrine of evolution. Liebig by 1826 had demonstrated the importance of organic chemistry. Bichat's *Recherches Physiologiques* came out in 1800, and was followed a few years later by Sir Charles Bell's investigations into the anatomy of the brain, and his discovery of the difference between the sensory and motor nervous mechanism. More exact methods began now to be applied to all physiological phenomena. Lyell, following in the footsteps of Hutton, was revolutionising geology, by substituting a uniformitarian theory for the older hypothesis of catastrophe. A little later the cellular theory of animal and plant organisation, announced respectively by Schwann and Schleiden, gave an entirely fresh direction to biological research; while the investigations of Meckel and Von Baer called into being the new science of embryology.

I have mentioned only a few of the landmarks in the new territory which science was conquering; but they are enough to show how great was the change which was coming over men's conception of organic and inorganic nature. Such a revolution could not but affect theology. We shall best understand how it did so, if we begin by pointing out some of the common features of this scientific activity.

First must be mentioned the desire to make science independent, and to free it from all theological or metaphysical presuppositions. The prime object of the investigator was the discovery and frank statement of facts in their naked simplicity. Truth for truth's sake became, and has since remained, the scientific ideal.

Secondly, scientific research was characterised by an

increasing use of the mathematical method of physics. An ideal of a thorough-going mechanical interpretation was set up, and it was boldly claimed that all the phenomena of life were amenable to mechanical treatment. As the century went on, the older theory of vitalism, which held the field in biology, was gradually displaced. The contrast between the organic and inorganic appeared so marked, and the behaviour of a living organism was so different from that of a machine, that it was felt that some special vital force or principle was operative in the former which accounted for its peculiarities. But no one had been able to explain the nature of this vital force. It remained a mystery, which could be invoked whenever an investigator found himself in a difficulty. Now science cannot admit the legitimacy of such an appeal to the unknown. Her object is to explain what lies before her by the use of known principles and methods. The hypothesis of vitalism was accordingly banished, and the processes of life were subjected to a rigorous mechanical treatment. Biology adopted the methods of molecular physics. Similarly in physiology, mechanism became the guiding principle. Exact methods, involving the use of quantitative estimates and precise standards of measurement, were applied to physiological phenomena, and were found to be productive of important results. Even the life of mind was treated in the same way, consciousness being studied in relation to its brain basis. The science of physiological psychology arose, and sought to explain the intimate relation between the physical and the mental, by emphasizing the dependence of the latter upon the former. The triumphs achieved by this extension of mechanical categories to the realm of life are the best justification of an attempt which seemed to many to be impious and over-daring. Whatever more they may be, living organisms, including men, are machines, when looked at from a certain point of view.

Thirdly, the result of all this investigation was to bring into prominence the thought of the unity of the universe. Just as the spectroscope has revealed one chemistry of sun and stars and planets, so organic and inorganic were linked together as exhibiting the same fundamental molecular processes. Everywhere identical forces were seen to be operating. The doctrine of the conservation of energy became the guiding

principle of scientific research. The universe was conceived as a self-contained whole which possessed a fixed amount of energy. This energy underwent constant transformations and redistributions, owing to alterations in the collocation of material particles, but never suffered either increase or loss. The further science prosecuted its inquiries, the more extensive were found to be the uniformities of nature's working. "Nothing is that errs from law" became the creed of the man of science, who was inspired by the hope of being able to show that the whole universe was a gigantic mechanism, infinitely complex indeed, yet of one structure throughout, and interpretable in terms of measurable energy.

We have now to consider some of the larger results of this development of physical science upon theology in England.

The first was a state of war between the two disciplines, which continued, with varying degrees of intensity, until the closing years of the century brought about a truce, if not a measure of reconciliation, between the opponents. We may, perhaps, distinguish three stages in the conflict—the earliest, when geology came into collision with the traditional view of the teaching of the book of Genesis; the second, when the successful application of mechanical methods to physiology led to the rise of materialism; the third, when Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, and the doctrine of evolution came into prominence.[1] For this conflict both science and theology were to blame; science because, overstepping its limits, it began to construct metaphysical theories, and loudly proclaimed materialism as the final philosophy; theology, because it clung blindly and unreasonably to traditional beliefs about the inspiration of the Bible, which were indefensible in the light of modern knowledge. A truce between the two has now been effected, because it is recognised that the ideal of science is to explain the world from a certain point of view. The ideal is strictly limited, and the method of pursuing it is one which involves abstraction and an artificial simplification of the

[1] The chronological limit of this first volume is 1860. The *Origin of Species* came out in 1859. But I have thought it best to leave for the second volume any full discussion of the doctrine of evolution, and its effect upon English theology. It was not till the last third of the century that the influence of the new teaching was generally appreciated.

problem. For example, science treats a living organism as a machine. The man of science wishes to show that mechanical categories can successfully be used to explain the life of the organism, and that its activities can be expressed in terms of molecular physics. He is absolutely right to make the attempt, and to frame any hypothesis which he chooses about the organism. He simplifies his problem in this way, and so the more easily applies his mechanical methods. But the life of the organism may be regarded from other points of view with which science has no concern. Suppose it to be a man who is the subject of investigation. We all instinctively feel that man is a creature of moral value. But the conception of value does not enter into science. Man possesses reason and self-consciousness. What conceivable application of quantitative standards of energy can explain self-consciousness? The life of mind is, doubtless, conditioned by the life of brain, and the latter science seeks to explain in physical terms. But to mind itself the categories of physics are inapplicable. Once again, man, looked at in the light of evolution, is the crowning term of a long organic development. We think of him as higher, not only structurally, but ethically, than the forms below him. But that is an appreciation entirely foreign to the outlook of science. Science comes into conflict with theology only when it asserts that mechanical principles are the sole principles available for the explanation of the world, and denies the validity of other points of view. Science, it must be remembered, when it keeps within its self-appointed bounds, has nothing to do with ultimate problems. These are the province of metaphysics. The concern of science is with the "how" and not the "why" of the universe, and, further, with the "how" viewed only as a series of mechanically connected happenings. It abstracts from all other aspects of a problem, and looks at it simply as a problem in physics. It sets out to reduce every problem to its simplest physical terms, and with the help of the fundamental conceptions of time, length, and mass, "to construct a mechanical model of nature." But such a model in no way represents the whole life or meaning of nature. If reality is pictured as a solid, the mechanical interpretation of nature is like a section arbitrarily cut through the solid; cut, it may be, where the

solid is widest, and so traversing more of it than any other section which has yet been cut, but still only a section, and therefore incapable of interpreting the constitution of the whole.[1] Whether science has not hampered itself by this procedure, in dealing, for instance, with some of the problems which the growth of living beings suggests, is an open question, and there are not wanting signs that it is reconsidering its method in this regard.[2] But the method is legitimate. It has brought success, and theology can have no real quarrel with it. Theologians, however, were slow to recognise the right of science to offer its own interpretation of the world. Again and again we see in the conflict how they entirely misunderstood the aims of the scientific investigator, and, what is still worse, how they refused to face the facts fairly, but took refuge in theories or dogmatic assertions, which the steady advance of knowledge proved to be untenable. To-day the rivalry between the two armies is less acute. Each side understands the other better. Science is more ready to admit that its inquiry is limited and abstract, and philosophy has taught theology that the scientific interpretation of the universe is only one out of many possible interpretations. One of the features of the development of theology in the last three decades of the nineteenth century has been its growing alliance with philosophy. The philosopher has shown the theologian a wider vision, and has made plain that the results reached by physical science are transfigured when handed up to metaphysics for the final synthesis.

Certain aspects of the struggle between science and theology require to be brought out more fully. There is, first, the question of miracle. The further science investigated the secrets of nature's working the more was the presence of law or uniformity revealed. What room was left for the supernatural? If by a miracle is meant a special divine interference with the customary operations of nature, was not the presumption against the probability of any such interference having taken place? It seemed as if God was being excluded

[1] This illustration and the short quotation; which precedes it, are taken from Whetham's *The Recent Development of Physical Science*, pp. 18 and 38. Chapter I of this book contains a clear discussion of the method and ideal of science at the present time.

[2] For a discussion of this point, cp. Sandeman's *Problems of Biology*.

from His universe, as if secondary causes alone were operative, and no place could be found for the direct activity of the divine will. The dispute raged throughout the century, and continues to-day. But a change has come over our thought which puts the dispute in a new light. In the first place, the conception of divine immanence has tended to make the distinction between primary and secondary causes unreal. Whatever else immanence may mean, it implies that God is always causally active. Every happening in nature is His operation. The physical universe is no longer thought of as a machine wound up and left to itself; it is the scene of a never-ceasing divine energy. The uniformities of nature are regarded as the expression of the constancy of the divine will. Thus the hard antithesis of natural and supernatural is softened. In the second place, we to-day draw no such rigid distinction between the spiritual and the physical as was drawn at an earlier date. We think rather of the two spheres as overlapping, or shading off into each other, while recent researches into the constitution of matter have tended to rob it of its crass materiality. Matter is now interpreted in terms of electrical energy; and between physical force and force of will the line of distinction can be less clearly drawn. Thus the whole problem of miracle and of the relation of natural to supernatural has assumed a new colour.

An immense alteration, again, has taken place in our general outlook owing to the discoveries of science as to the age of the earth and the extent of the physical universe. Where our grandfathers reckoned by centuries we reckon by millennia. We picture a universe in which the planet on which we live is but a tiny speck in a boundless system of suns. We think of the earth as having slowly reached its present form by a gradual development through millions of years. A great cosmic drama unfolds itself before us. This new orientation of time and space has had a marked effect upon literature.[1] Tennyson's *In Memoriam* affords a good example of the results of scientific research for the emotions and the imagination. Science here has become romantic as well as historical. Nor has the widening of the horizon been without influence upon theology. In the first place, our thought of God has been enriched. We

[1] Cp. Dowden's *Studies in Literature*, "The Scientific Movement in Literature."

conceive of Him as the infinite Spirit "whose dwelling is the light of setting suns," and for whom "a thousand years are but as one day." And we no longer picture Him in Deistic fashion as apart from His universe, but think of Him as near at hand, as the immanent, sustaining power of the whole creation.[1] In the second place, the doctrine of immortality has received an increased emphasis. If man is the product of an age-long striving of the past, can we think of him in his present condition as having reached his full stature? Must he not have a future in which he may rise to heights denied him now, when capacities latent here may have full opportunity of expansion? It is, I think, unquestionable that the doctrine of evolution has, on the whole, reinforced the belief in immortality, though it may be argued, on the other hand, that the evolutionary process, as we see it in nature, while "careful of the type," is utterly "careless of the single life." But at this point other considerations emerge. Our recognition of the vastness of the physical universe has helped to accentuate the thought of spiritual values. In certain moods it seems incredible that this planet should have been the scene of a redemption such as that in which the Christian believes. But the counter-thought at once arises, that physical vastness and moral worth have nothing in common. We turn from the contemplation of the immensities of time and space to the ethical and religious significance of man, and find a spiritual meaning in and behind natural process. The central issue in the struggle between science and theology has been whether naturalism or some form of spiritual idealism shall prevail. The dispute has ranged over a wide area. At one time attention has been focussed upon miracle, at another upon the dependence of mind on brain, at another, again, upon the problem of final causes. But all these questions are parts of a larger problem—the problem whether any religious meaning can be found in the universe, or whether a creed of naturalism is to provide us with our philosophy of life.

It is easy, in view of the fact that there has been so much opposition between science and theology, to think of science as

[1] Pünjer, however, cautions us against assuming that all the Deist writers conceived of God in this external fashion. Cp. *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, p. 289.

permanently hostile to the claims of spirit. But we must remember that science has its ideal aspect, and that it has abandoned the dogmatic materialism which characterised it in the middle of the nineteenth century. In speaking of science we are apt to think only of physical science and its mathematical methods, and of these, again, as offering to provide the final interpretation of reality. We forget that the wisest science recognises its own limitations and makes no pretensions to be metaphysical; and that to the credit of the scientific spirit as a whole must be set down the work of the historical sciences, with all that they have done in teaching us what methodical research means. Science has deepened and broadened the ideal of truth, and has stimulated our search for it. Nor can it be fairly said that the results which physical science has now reached are such as can find no place in a scheme of religious idealism.

Philosophical Idealism

Idealism is a word with many meanings, and is applicable to several very diverse systems of thought. Happily we are not called on here to discuss the technicalities of idealist philosophy, though some of the main differences between its schools will become apparent in the course of this section. It will be enough for present purposes if we use idealism in a large sense, as signifying, in contradistinction to materialism, the priority and supremacy of the spiritual in man and in the universe around him. My immediate object is merely to indicate in briefest outline some of the more important ways in which the mind of the nineteenth century was influenced by German idealism, and some of the results which followed for theological thought. The extent of that influence it would be difficult to exaggerate; and it may fairly be maintained that the development of theology in the century is a commentary upon the German speculative movement. It is only with larger issues that we are now concerned. Another chapter treats more fully of the relations between idealism and theology.

In the forefront of this influence must be placed the witness of idealism to the creative power of reason. Both idealism and romanticism, which in some ways may be regarded as the

literary expression of idealism, enriched the thought of human nature, and showed that man, in virtue of the spontaneity of his intellectual and imaginative powers, is, in no small degree, the creator of the world in which he lives. Modern idealism sprang from Kant, who, dissatisfied with the dogmatism and intellectual conceit of the Wolffian philosophy, and recognising that the empiricism of Locke, as Hume had demonstrated, could never account for the growth of knowledge and experience, set himself to inquire critically into the nature of the knowing mind. The result of his analysis was to prove that mind from the very first makes its own contribution to knowledge, by supplying the principles which give order to the chaos of impressions pouring in through the avenues of sense. The task of Kant's successors was to carry still further the analysis of the growth of knowledge, to free Kant's work from the contradictions with which it abounds, to bring into closer relationship the knowing mind and the object known, and to show how an immanent reason gives unity to the worlds of nature and humanity.

Kant's importance can hardly be over-rated. He put the theory of knowledge on a new footing. In ethics he dealt a heavy blow at the prevailing creed of utilitarianism, by insisting that duty lost its high significance if it was reduced to the pursuit of pleasure, or to any self-interested calculation of consequences. His doctrine of the spontaneous creative power of the imagination forms the basis of modern theories of æsthetic. He was not free from inconsistencies. Though he was in revolt against the systems of philosophy, whether rationalistic or empirical, which held sway in the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, he never entirely liberated himself from their presuppositions; and these hung about him as a dead-weight, hampering his thought at every turn. But his inconsistencies do not detract from his greatness. He was the champion of man's freedom and spiritual dignity. He showed that man was more than a creature of sense, and belonged to a spiritual world. Everywhere his reach exceeded his grasp, a fact in which Kant saw the pledge and promise of a development which demanded immortality for its completion.

The later stages of this philosophical movement may be summarily described by saying that idealism was feeling its

way towards the discovery of objective standards. If man's reason is a free, constructive power, if he is possessed of a creative spontaneity, what is the relation of that fact to nature and history? In both of these we find abundant traces of what we may call imbedded reason. Whose reason? It cannot be the reason of the individual, for he perishes after threescore years and ten; but nature abides, and the march of history continues. Whatever man's creative power may be, the individual is born into a universe which is prior to him, and conditions his growth. The answer given by idealism was that it was God's reason; and the object of subsequent speculation was to show how a common reason was at work both in man and in the world outside him. Nature and man were thus the twofold expression of the divine intelligence. Experience was throughout rational; thought and being were identical. Fichte, in his later writings, was the first to introduce this conception of God as the underlying idea or life manifesting itself in the processes of nature and history, but he never fully worked out his thought. It was left for Schelling and Hegel to develop it, and to interpret the universe as the embodiment of one absolute reason. The conception of the unity of all being became central in philosophy. The reign of intellectualism began. Reality was construed in terms of thought, as the manifestation of a divine mind. Or rather, as absolutism maintained, it was that mind, objectified in the world of things, and rising to self-consciousness in human intelligence.

That a reaction against absolute idealism should set in was inevitable. The movement of philosophy in the latter half of the nineteenth century has been a protest against the system. Men began to ask whether the metaphysical ideal of absolutism was not too daring, and whether an absolutist standpoint was possible for a human thinker. Can the finite mind hope to see with the larger eyes of God? Was it not altogether vain to make the attempt? Criticism, again, was directed against two other features of the movement. In the first place, it was felt to be too purely speculative and intellectual. It deified intellect at the expense of other elements in human nature, and it dealt with abstractions, turning life into logic, and thinning out reality into "bloodless categories." In the second

place, it failed to do justice to personality. The individual was swallowed up by, and lost in, the whole. He became a mere channel through which flowed the life of the absolute. The revolt against this teaching is seen in the rise of Personal Idealism, Pragmatism, and various systems of Pluralism. In other directions also the reaction is manifested. The nineteenth century was characterised by its search for facts and its general spirit of inquiry. Nature and history were subjected to the minutest investigation. Speculation, it was seen, had outstripped knowledge. A final synthesis had been attempted before the necessary materials for the task were available. Thus a metaphysical pause ensued, which still continues, though there are indications that philosophy is again beginning to be constructive. But we wait for the master mind who shall co-ordinate the various movements of our time, and reveal their hidden unity.

Idealism made prominent the conception of evolution or development. The unity of existence was viewed as a unity of process. The story of the earth showed a clear line of ascent from dead to living matter, from animal life to man, from man uncivilised to man as a member of the State. At each stage of the advance the immanent purpose and spiritual significance of the whole became more apparent. It is important to remember that the idea of evolution, which biology was later on so amply to illustrate, was making itself felt thus early in a general way. It is there in Herder, for example, who throughout his writings takes the genetic point of view, and loves to trace back to their source literary and historical movements. You find it in Schelling, whose conception of nature was that of a developing organism; and again in Goethe, whose botanical studies led him to see in the leaf-bud the original type of which all varieties in floral structure are modifications. Above all, it is the sovereign category of Hegel's thought, and is applied by him to the entire range of natural process and human activity. Nature, art, religion, politics, literature,—he views them all as growths, as stages in the universal divine process through which the life of God returns to itself in increasing fullness. The completer knowledge of the past which has resulted from the patient labours of an army of scholars has necessitated a revision of many of Hegel's historical con-

clusions; but to him belongs the honour of having shown how the conception of development can be fruitfully applied in every department of inquiry.

We have now to see in what special ways this conception has affected the thought of the nineteenth century:—(*a*) In the first place, we have the rise of the historical method which has resulted from the application to history of the idea of evolution. This I have already sufficiently discussed. (*b*) In the second place, the evolutionary outlook has helped to shatter individualism. The isolated individual is seen to be a figment. The study of man in his development has proved his dependence at every turn upon outward conditions. Both Herder and Schelling insisted that, if you would understand man, you must take account of all the influences, physical, moral, social, which have been playing upon him from the day of his first appearance upon earth. Hegel emphasized the same lesson, which Aristotle had taught long before, that man is πολιτικὸν ζῷον, owing his origin to society and finding in his membership in the State his only true means of self-realisation. Idealist speculation, however, tended to lose the individual in the whole. It is true, indeed, that "we live, and move, and have our being" in God, and so, in some sense, are organs and instruments of the divine life; yet personality, surely, involves the existence of a separate centre of feeling and consciousness. God is not I, and I am not God. Nor am I the mere product of external forces. In virtue of my freedom I have power to react upon, and to control, circumstances. Personality has its rights, and must assert them. But atomism is "a creed outworn." The study of history and the thought of evolution have for ever made it impossible to treat society as a collection of independent units held together by mechanical bonds. Our outlook to-day is organic, in relation both to humanity as a whole, and to the individual who nowhere exists apart from society.

(*c*) Thirdly, the conception of development has given to our thought a teleological colour. We regard the movement of the universe as a movement toward a goal, and as expressive of purpose. When we think of process we think of change determined to an end. Teleology, for example, underlies all Hegel's philosophy. In England, at the opening of the nineteenth century, the teleology of Paley was in general favour. But, as

we have seen, his exposition of the argument from design was confessedly popular and of very limited range.[1] He constructed a teleology of special instances of contrivance in nature, and placed God in the position of an artificer standing outside His work. The teleology implied in the thought of development is something very different. It views the process of nature as a whole, as a vast movement unfolding to a distant goal. Each step in that process is both means and end, has its own immediate value, while at the same time it serves for subsequent advance. And for an external designer the newer teleology substitutes the thought of an immanent purpose.

The transcendence of God is a principle vital to Christian theology; and it is possible that we place too much emphasis to-day upon the conception of the divine immanence, and of the universe as a self-contained whole, developing by its own inherent powers. But any readjustment which may be effected in this matter can never bring about a reversion to Paley's position. That has been completely undermined by the teaching of Darwin. The belief in special creation, which was Paley's sheet anchor, has vanished before the belief in descent from a common stock with progressive modification; while the adaptation of organisms to their surroundings, Paley's contrivance, is explained by natural selection, without the necessity of appeal to direct divine interference.

The teleological implications of the conception of development are, however, by no means clear; nor are they universally accepted, even in a general sense. Many who are ready to think of the universe as a process determined to an end are unwilling to allow that such a thought involves a theistic faith. They prefer to interpret the movement as one of unconscious natural tendency. But mechanism can supply no ultimate explanation of reality. You must assume as your evolutionary starting-point either a chaos of material particles, or a system of such. If you begin with chaos, which is itself unthinkable, you can never evolve order from it. If, on the other hand, you start with system, you can explain the presence of the system only by the help of some spiritual principle. It was one of Lotze's chief merits, while advocating to the full the claims of mechanical interpretation, to have shown that

[1] Cp. ch. iii.

mechanism has no metaphysics, and that the unity and interrelationships of the universe require some form of teleological explanation. If we could arrive at a deeper understanding of life and the living organism, our way would be clearer. Meanwhile no task is more pressing for philosophy than to investigate the meaning and precise teleological significance of development.

The change of attitude which the thought of development has brought about is seen nowhere more plainly than in the study of psychology. An interest in psychology has been characteristic of English philosophy, which, unlike German philosophy, has generally tended to adopt the psychological method. But psychology in England has only recently freed itself from the dominance of the older empirical creed and learned to take a genetic point of view. The result has been a complete transformation of the science. The conception of the unity of the personality has taken the place of the earlier division into faculties. The living creature, man or animal, is thought of as being determined in its growth from the first by interests which he seeks to realise, and purposes which he strives, however blindly, to achieve. Effort, creation, the reaching-out after completer self-expression, the presence within the organism of tendencies manifesting themselves in the struggle for fuller life, are the clues which the modern psychologist uses in his inquiry. Just as it is being increasingly felt that life is more than mechanism, and that the reduction of biology to physics is possible only at the expense of leaving out of account the phenomena peculiar to living creatures, so it is being felt that a mere analytical psychology which seeks to reduce the life of mind to its elements, and then show how the elements can be recombined, is utterly inadequate. Mental life has its elements, but they are never found except in vital combination with others. They are elements of a whole, and the whole is always present in each of them. Life at every stage is a unity marked by purposive tendencies, and the teleological character of psychology to-day is a recognition of that fact.

In considering the influence upon English theology of idealist speculation, we must again remind ourselves that the relations between philosophy and theology were not the same in England

as they were in Germany. In Germany, when the idealist movement was in full development, the two were always intimately allied. It was the aim of each German thinker to produce a theology which should be in harmony with his metaphysics. The result was that theology was subordinated to general philosophy. Christianity suffered in the process. Her facts and doctrines were violently forced into the shape dictated by metaphysical requirements. It was not till about the year 1840 that a sounder historical criticism of Christianity began to arise which restored the balance between theory and fact. In England the course of events was very different. English theology, as a whole, did not feel the influence of German philosophy till after 1860. Germanism was a term of abhorrence among the majority of the clergy, Some movement certainly there was in the direction of reconstruction of belief. But the pioneers of the new thought were few in number, and were regarded with the utmost suspicion. Nowhere has English insularity been more marked than in the theological outlook of the first half of the nineteenth century. The change, however, when it came, came quickly and forcibly; and the last forty years of the century witnessed an upheaval which has affected the whole range of Christian doctrine. It was not only Biblical criticism which proved victorious, but philosophical problems began to bulk more largely in theological inquiry. Theology received from German philosophy a new stimulus, and entered upon a fruitful constructive epoch.

Among the changes which came over theology, as a result of its contact with idealism, the following are, perhaps, the most significant:

(*a*) The ideal, and in consequence the method, of the theologian were radically altered. English theology in the eighteenth century was engaged in elaborating schemes of dogma which were highly artificial in character, and showed no natural affiliation of one doctrine with another. If the theologian of that epoch had any ideal at all, it was mechanical, not organic. He made little or no attempt to trace the development of doctrines from a common root or principle. Schleiermacher, as we shall see, did more than any one else to effect a change in this matter, and to sketch for theology an evolutionary ideal which profoundly influenced the whole subsequent develop-

ment of the science. Now it is true that Schleiermacher reached this ideal through a study of the history of religion; it was his feeling for religion as a historical growth which shaped his conception of theological method. And it has been the study of comparative religion which has been mainly instrumental in giving the theologian of to-day his new outlook. Yet some part in the reconstruction must be conceded to idealism. Each of the great post-Kantian idealist philosophers tried to demonstrate the organic nature of truth, and to frame a system which unfolded from a fundamental principle. Their work was not free from artificiality; they were too ready to force facts into their speculative moulds; and this is particularly noticeable in their treatment of Christianity. But at least they set a standard for theology, and by emphasizing the conception of development pointed the way to a new ideal. History and philosophy thus worked hand in hand in bringing about the transformation.

(*b*) Something has already been said about the influence of Romanticism in helping to produce a new apologetic. Idealist philosophy moved in the same direction. Two classes of problem called for solution. On the one hand were the questions raised by the literary and historical criticism of the Bible. On the other hand, and going far deeper down, were those which metaphysical speculation brought to the front. The most significant issues for theology were philosophical; and we can trace a growing appreciation of this fact, as the influence of German idealism spread. It was not so much that idealism made the English theologian take an interest in philosophy. It was rather that he turned to the deeper thought of Germany for weapons with which to meet the attacks of materialist science. He could get no help, but rather the reverse, from the philosophy of J. S. Mill and his school, and so was driven to seek the aid of German thinkers. Apologetics thus became increasingly philosophical. Men began to see that the theistic foundations must be made sure, before they could deal with the specific problems of Christianity. The last thirty years of the nineteenth century witnessed a large output of apologetic literature which treated of subjects lying on the borderland of science, religion, and philosophy. Theology gained both in depth and vitality by its alliance with philo-

sophy, and learned to abandon its old attitude of hostility to new ways of thought.

(*c*) Idealism brought into prominence the thought of the divine immanence. Immanence is a term which is often used in a loose and uncritical fashion, and may be nothing but a thin disguise for pantheism. It should be carefully considered how far the conception has any meaning when applied to the divine will, or how far the life of spirit can be described by a word which carries with it a spatial reference. Problems like these will be most conveniently discussed, when we come to investigate what doctrinal use theologians made of the conception in the later years of the century. That doctrine should be affected by it is only what we should antecedently expect; for it was nothing less than a revolution in thought to abandon a deistic and mechanical view of God's relation to the universe, and to substitute for it the idea of the universe as a growing organism, pulsating with life, and indwelt by the divine Spirit.

(*d*) More significant, however, than any of these changes was the increasing recognition by theologians of the importance of the problem of Christ's Person. Theological speculation in the nineteenth century was predominantly Christological. Nor is it difficult to see the reasons for this. The idealist philosophers had aimed at bridging the gulf between the human and the divine. Hegel, for example, viewing the world-process as a development in which a divine life was being progressively realised, taught that God was perpetually incarnating Himself in humanity, and in the life of men found His fullest self-expression. But in the story of the human race the Person of Christ stood out supreme. What interpretation could be given of Him? In connection with His Incarnation emerged the philosophical problem of the relation of the eternal to the temporal, of the absolute to the finite and historical. Here was a challenge to the theologian to investigate anew the historical Christ, and, having found Him, to show that the doctrinal interpretation of His Person, given by orthodox theology, could be sustained. Idealism had been baffled by the Christological problem. It was the feeling that these speculative Christologies had neglected the historical basis of Christianity, and had been too ready to treat facts as if they were ideas, which led to a reaction, and set theologians

upon the path of detailed historical inquiry. The central problem, then, was the reconciliation of the Christ of history with the Christ of dogma. In addition there was the Christ of experience, whose redeeming activity through the centuries was the cardinal doctrine of Schleiermacher's theology. Place had to be found for Him in the coming reconstruction, and the relation of a living faith to the historical facts from which it sprang had to be determined. The issue thus thrust to the front by speculation has been kept in that position by the comparative study of religion, which has shown that what differences Christianity from all other systems is the place in it occupied by its Founder.

For nearly a century theology has been concerned with this many-sided Christological problem, has explored it in all its ramifications, and has sought to solve it with the help of the fresh knowledge which research has won. It remains the most living of problems to-day, requiring for its solution the co-operation of history, philosophy, and personal religious experience.

The French Revolution and Democracy

We may distinguish two main influences of the French Revolution upon English theology, but each of them was indirect rather than direct. The first is the rise of a critical and negative temper of thought; the second, the growth of a democratic spirit. Both affected the Church, and theology through the Church, but in different directions. The first led to a reaction in favour of the Church, as the one stable institution in an epoch of change, and the upholder of authority amid the welter of passion and individualism. The second made theologians consider more carefully the social bearings of Christianity, gave added emphasis to the doctrine of the Incarnation, and taught men that Christ's religion was one of redemption both for body and soul.

In its earlier stages the French Revolution was a destructive movement. It embodied the spirit of violent revolt against law and order. It represented the protest of an individualism bent on asserting its own rights, even at the cost of destroying the whole social fabric of the State. Such a temper, when it concerned itself with religion, was bound to issue in negations.

For ecclesiastical authority it had no respect; tradition it regarded merely as an incubus from a dead past. Failing to recognise its debt to the past, it became merely critical and revolutionary. In French materialism it found a welcome ally, for did not materialism spell atheism, and was not the false belief in God the source of the pretensions of ecclesiastical authority? Throughout the eighteenth century materialist teaching had been gathering force both in France and England. But, whereas in England the materialists had, for the most part, been anxious to come to some kind of terms with theology, and had not altogether banished God from their mechanical interpretation of the universe, in France the case was different. There materialism, in the hands of such men as Diderot, Cabanis, and Holbach, was equivalent to a frank atheism.

The extent to which this teaching had affected the English mind is not altogether easy to determine. But that it was a source of danger is seen from the references to it in episcopal charges in the early years of the nineteenth century, and from the publication of such a book as Thomas Rennell's *Remarks on Scepticism*.[1] But the avowed supporters of a materialist creed were probably few. The instinct of the Englishman for religion was too deep-rooted to be easily destroyed. Among the working classes, however, it spread to some extent, less, perhaps, as a definite creed, than as a disintegrating influence which, coming at a time of severe economic distress, caused a general feeling of unrest, and formed a seed-plot for the growth of revolutionary ideas. That there was a marked hostility to the Church in many quarters of the industrial population is clear, but this represented as much an attack on privilege and class supremacy as an opposition to current theology. The result was a reaction in favour of the Church, brought about by a fresh endeavour on the part of the latter to win the support of the masses. A period of activity set in. The Church awoke from its slumbers, and busied itself with removing the abuses in its system, and trying to increase its influence in the national life. Men began to look to the Church

[1] *Remarks on Scepticism, especially as it is connected with the subjects of Organisation and Life*, 1819. Rennell was Christian advocate in the University of Cambridge. The book is distinctly an able one.

as a centre of order and authority, and the way was thus prepared for the constructive effort of the Oxford Movement.

The second influence of the Revolution, the birth of the democratic spirit, has had wider and more permanent results. An enthusiasm for humanity sprang up, and a sentiment of brotherhood. The justice of class distinctions was questioned. The demand was for liberty and equality. An optimistic temper flourished which saw visions of a new earth and a perfected human nature, not as remote possibilities in a distant future, but as capable of present realisation—

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

So sang Wordsworth who felt as deeply as any the thrill of the new hope, until mature reflection failed to justify the actual course which the Revolution had taken, and the attack on Switzerland caused him to regard France as the foe rather than the champion of liberty. Coleridge and Southey, in like manner, were caught up in the rush of the new enthusiasm, and dreamed their dreams of Pantisocracy, only to find by wider experience that the task of regenerating human nature was a work, not of decades, but of centuries. This new feeling for humanity and for the rights of man was not a mere vague sentiment. It had an ethical root, and was the expression of a moral demand that society should be based on justice, and that the claims of the poorer classes should be recognised. Already, before the French Revolution, Bentham had been preaching the doctrines of utilitarianism, and his work was carried on by a group of philosophical radicals, chief among whom were the two Mills. Between utilitarianism and the new spirit of democracy there was a natural affinity. Bentham and his successors, whatever may be thought about their ethical hedonism and the logic of their position, were in intention and sympathy the champions of altruism. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is a maxim which looks away from the individual to the claims of the whole, and, in point of fact, it was the influence of the utilitarian leaders which brought about a much-needed movement of social reform. They kept their eye upon the ills of the body politic, and spared no pains to have them cured. Utilitarianism succeeded in creating a

sense of corporate responsibility, and gave a practical direction to the sentiment of humanity. The abstract individualism of Rousseau which inspired the early stages of the French Revolution gave place to something more concrete, to a sense of the solidarity of humanity, and to a doctrine of the State as the embodiment of the organic reason of the community—a doctrine after which Rousseau was feeling, and of which Hegel was the profoundest exponent.

The character of the democratic movement has, in the course of the nineteenth century, undergone great changes. It is worth while to dwell on these, not only because they help us better to understand the mind of our own age, but because they make clearer the task which now lies before theology. The democratic movement began with an assertion of the plea for individual liberty; it has since taken the form of an appeal to the power of the State. It began as a sentiment and an enthusiasm; it is now, while not uninspired by passion, a movement directed to the control of the economic and industrial forces of the community. Speaking in general terms, we may say that the task which lay before the modern world at the Reformation was the recovery of individual freedom. That task was accomplished, not, however, without the destruction of much that was valuable in the life of an earlier society. Yet, on the whole, the gain was greater than the loss. A spirit of individualism everywhere asserted itself among Protestant communities; it was the characteristic feature of English thought in the eighteenth century. But, as we have seen, that century lacked the historical sense; and an individualism, untempered by a study of history, can provide no adequate solution of the problems of life and thought. Individualism broke down, and the nineteenth century was faced with the problem of building upon its ruins a sounder fabric. In the reconstruction which followed, the following factors may be distinguished. First, philosophical idealism, emphasizing the thought of a world-process, and of a common reason in all men, tended to put humanity in place of the individual. Hegel directed attention to the State as the highest expression of this common reason. Secondly, the growing study of history showed how the individual was dependent, throughout his whole development, upon the physical and social conditions

with which he was surrounded; a dependence which was made still more clear by the doctrine of evolution. Thirdly, the rapid growth of industry, and of a large industrial population, forced to the front the economic problem. The development of industry meant the depression of the individual, who seemed increasingly powerless in presence of vast economic movements which he could not control. In addition, competition so intensified the struggle for daily bread, that the claims of the inner life were in danger of being forgotten altogether. Applied science revolutionised industry; but the tyranny of the work made the worker a slave. Liberation was sought in the attempt to improve the social condition of the worker; and for this end the power of the State was invoked. The workers, indeed, learned to combine, gaining thus strength in union; but even so, without State aid, they were unable to achieve much. Hence it has come about that one of the most striking features of our modern social life is the desire to effect, through State agency, an industrial revolution for the benefit of the masses. No one can quarrel with the labourer when he claims a larger share in the material prosperity of the age. You cannot build up a full soul on an empty stomach. Yet there is a danger that life may be despiritualised by the pressure of material needs. It is for religion, and for theology, which is religion in its systematised and reflective form, to reassert the essential spirituality of human life, and to provide it with a divine background. If that can be done, then the individual who is now lost in the mass will again come to his own. But he can recover his true freedom only if he becomes aware of his relation to God. The individual, treated as an independent unit, cannot out of his own resources build up an enduring spiritual life. That achievement, however, may be his, if he can be brought to realise his fellowship with the divine and the eternal.[1]

The task, then, which confronts theology at the present time is the vindication of the supremacy of the spiritual. But in carrying it out there are two special difficulties which must be noted. In the first place, though the historical and comparative methods have brought to theology so much enrich-

[1] Cp. Eucken's *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, sect. D. 3. I have borrowed some suggestions from Eucken's analysis of the democratic movement.

ment, the use of them is not without danger to Christianity. In seeking for affinities between Christianity and other faiths, and in trying to defend its universality on the ground that it takes up and completes what is good and vital in other religions, it is easy to lose sight of its peculiar features. Supernaturalism is of the essence of Christianity, which claims to be from above, both in its origin and in the power which it wields for the redemption of human life. But the object of the historian is to trace the natural history of religion without any hypothesis of intervention from without. He seeks to assign to Christianity its place in the evolutionary process, and he finds it to be the crown of the process, because it realises a universal ideal, after which other religions were feeling. The theologian, too, emphasizes the universality of Christianity, but insists that it is unique, as well as comprehensive. He must be on his guard against the temptation to make it merely the last stage of a natural evolution. On the other hand, thought cannot rest content with any crude antithesis of natural and supernatural. What is needed is some reconciliation between the two, some definition of Christianity which, while it preserves its uniqueness, shall set it forth in its universal relation to all other faiths. It is in this direction that the deepest theological thought of the time is moving.[1]

The second difficulty which theology has to meet arises from the fact that many of its formal statements of belief reflect ways of thinking which the modern world has outgrown. In vindicating the supremacy of the spiritual, theologians must concern themselves with issues which are alive, and must use modern speech. Reconstruction and reformulation of dogma are imperative. An immense intellectual revolution has been accomplished, and theology must boldly face the situation. She will not reach finality in her representation of Christian truth. There can be no finality in the matter so long as there is progress in general knowledge. But she can at least achieve some advance for this generation, and it is the spiritual interests of this generation which are her immediate care. What is needed is, in the words of the late Edward Caird, "a thorough reformation (in the etymological sense of the word) of the whole edifice of dogma and institution in a way which few of

[1] Cp. *The Essence of Christianity*, by W. A. Brown, ch. viii.

the friends of religion have yet realised, and still fewer have had the faith and courage to attempt."[1]

As we survey the changes which came over the thought of the nineteenth century, we are struck by the fact that they are due to the co-operation of a number of forces, all of which were moving in the same direction. The historical method, romanticism with its interest in the past, German idealism with its thought of world-process and development, and finally evolutionary science, are all consilient factors of a broad movement, the keynote of which is the conception of growth. We think to-day in terms of development; our outlook is historical. This conception of growth has yet more fully to be explored. Meanwhile it holds the field, and influences our thought in innumerable ways. Of its results for theology I have tried in these two chapters to say something, but I should like, by way of conclusion, to say something more. It appears to me that all the problems which confront theology to-day are parts of the one great problem of the place and significance in Christian theology of the Person of Christ. The quarrel between naturalism and supernaturalism comes to a head when His Person is considered. In Him centres the problem of a progressive revelation and a teleology of history. The problem of how to present Christianity as a universal religion will be best met if He is exhibited as capable of satisfying human need, and providing a spiritual power for the regeneration of humanity. His mind and character supply us with a standard for criticising the various forms which Christianity in its historical evolution has assumed. Scholarship and research have helped us to recover the historical Christ. But the recovery of Him is no mere satisfaction for pious curiosity. It is a fact, the significance of which for a theology grown conscious of the need of reconstruction can hardly be overestimated.

[1] Essay on Rousseau in *Essays in Literature and Philosophy.*

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN GERMANY

Biblical criticism was an outgrowth of a movement wider than itself. It was the application to a special subject-matter of the general method of historical inquiry, which had its birth in Germany, and from there spread to England, until it coloured the whole of English theology. The broad result of this treatment of the Bible was to bring the Jewish and Christian Scriptures into line with general history and literature. No longer could the Bible, or the history of the nation whose religious achievement it records, be isolated. Whatever special features the Bible might possess would emerge into view, after it had been subjected to the same methods of investigation which were applied to any other literature. To assume beforehand that the Bible was not subject to the ordinary conditions which govern the growth of any national literature was to render true historical study impossible. But to apply to the Bible the canons of historical criticism was to raise at once the many problems connected with revelation, inspiration, miracle, divine superintendence. In the Deistic controversy of the eighteenth century these very problems had been argued and counter-argued, until exhaustion overtook the combatants. But they had been discussed on inadequate premises by men who had little sense of history, and who imperfectly understood the issues involved in the antithesis of natural and supernatural. They were now taken up again as elements in a wider inquiry which proceeded with new methods and a different aim.

We must look to Lessing and Herder primarily, but also to Niebuhr and Savigny, as the creators of the historical method. History was for Lessing a continuous process in which we are to see God's gradual education of humanity. Revelation was the progressive instruction of the race. Humanity he pictured

as a giant individual, passing from infancy through childhood to full maturity, and at each stage receiving increasing illumination. Religion was man's response to the action of God upon him, and within him, It was no artificial creation of self-interested priests or rulers, but was rooted in the needs of man's spirit, and represented a natural movement of man toward God, in correspondence with the movement of God toward man. Its presence in all races as a vital element of their existence was proof that it was based on no illusion. No elaborate and artificial apologetic was required for its defence. It lived, it grew, it was its own apology.

Lessing profoundly influenced the thought of the age in three ways:

(*a*) He took up and developed Leibniz's doctrine of continuity, and applied it to history, thus recalling men's minds to the need for a careful and sympathetic study of the past, if they would understand the present. This power of sympathy with the life and thought of other times and races Lessing possessed to the full. His interest in the religions of the East and of heathen tribes was due to his perception that every stage in the evolution of religion was valuable, as contributing something to the interpretation of the whole. A fragment here, a gleam of truth there, the survival of an old custom or superstition—you could neglect none of them, for each was a step in a vast organic movement, and was fraught with something of the significance of the whole. Of religion Lessing would have said what Wordsworth says of the cloud in *The Leech-Gatherer*, that it

> "Moveth altogether, if it move at all."

Such teaching naturally met with opposition from the upholders of orthodox, dogmatic Christianity, who felt that the supremacy of Christianity was threatened by the refusal to allow finality to any one dogmatic system. Lessing defended Christianity on the ground of its adaptation to the needs of human nature, but held that it would be superseded in course of time by a more perfect religion and a purer ethical code, though in this transformation its essentials would be preserved. He drew also a distinction between Christianity and the religion of Christ, holding that ecclesiastics and theologians had overlaid the simple teaching

of Jesus with a mass of doctrinal subtleties. In order that primitive Christianity might be recovered, there must be a return to the study of the earliest Christian records. Lessing's attack upon current orthodoxy had important results, both for criticism and for the philosophy of religion. In particular, men were led to consider the nature of revelation and its relation to reason. Lessing himself regarded revelation as an anticipation of the results which human reason would by slower processes eventually reach.

(*b*) In opposition to Deism, with its God at a distance from the universe, Lessing taught a doctrine of divine immanence, and revealed a world instinct in every part with spiritual life. The Age of Enlightenment sought to measure all truth by purely rationalistic standards. Lessing, who had the feeling of the poet and artist, insisted that truth did not enter into man solely by the avenues of reason. To the bare understanding the worlds of art and natural beauty could not yield their secrets. There were depths in the human spirit which the plummet of logic could not sound. Too often in the past had theology stifled religion with its cerements of dogma and definition. Spiritual truth was always richer and broader than the intellectual rendering of it. The spirit was more potent than the letter; the written record was inferior to the inner witness of the heart.[1]

(*c*) Thirdly, Lessing, influenced again by Leibniz's conception of the evolution of the monad, showed that the idea of evolution might be made a powerful instrument of historical criticism. Criticism henceforth began to be governed by the ideas of origin and end, and of the process from the one to the other. It became genetic and historical, abandoning arbitrariness, and endeavouring by patient research to discover the laws of growth in the subject under investigation.

Toward the end of his life Lessing was engaged in definite theological controversy which had an important bearing upon

[1] We must be careful, however, not to misunderstand Lessing's relation to the Age of the Enlightenment. He broke away from it far less than did Herder. He was essentially a critic, and so tended to make the human understanding the final arbiter. In his rejection of orthodoxy he adopts the rationalist standpoint. But he had a wider vision than the rationalists; and in particular dwelt upon two ideas which were foreign to rationalism, the ideas of Individualism and Development. Cp. Pünjer's *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 564–572.

the rise of Biblical criticism. The daughter of Reimarus, Professor of Oriental Languages at Hamburg, handed to Lessing on her father's death his *Apology for the Rational Worshippers of God*. Lessing published extracts from this work under the title *The Wolfenbüttel Fragments*. The public was intended to conclude that the work was the transcript of a document by an anonymous author found in the library at Wolfenbüttel. The work reflects the tone and temper of English Deism. It defends natural religion, and criticises the evidence for the miracles recorded in the Bible. The assumption, common at the time both to the orthodox and the rationalists, was that the Bible and Christianity stood or fell together. Every attack on the Bible was regarded as an attack on Christianity. The orthodox argued that, because Christianity was true, the Bible was true. The rationalists replied that Christianity was untrue, because there were some things in the Bible which were clearly false. Lessing criticised this common assumption, maintaining that the Bible was not necessary to a belief in Christianity, because Christianity was a living power before the New Testament took its present form, Further, he argued that to base your belief in the truth of a religion on any written record, or on any argument from miracle or prophecy, was to miss the real evidence for religion. The truths of religion were internal truths of the reason, and as such could never be proved by the evidence of history.[1] The problem which was exercising Lessing was how to preserve the spiritual authority of Christianity, when criticism was weakening the historical evidences for it. By setting the inner witness above the written record he gave an impulse to the spirit of criticism.

In a posthumous work, *A New Hypothesis concerning the Evangelists regarded as merely Human Writers* (1788), Lessing attacked the problem of the origin of the Gospels. He suggested that the basis of all the Gospels was a written set of records about Jesus, constructed from the oral narratives of the Apostles and other eye-witnesses; and that John knew and used both the original records and the Gospels based on them, but wrote with a different aim and purpose.[2] By his activity

[1] Cp. Pünjer, *op. cit.*, pp. 573–577.

[2] Strauss wrote of this work: "A mere pamphlet in two sheets, but containing the fruitful seeds of all subsequent inquiries upon this subject." Cp. *A New Life of Jesus*, authorised translation, p. 103.

in the field of Biblical inquiry Lessing helped to secure the right of free investigation, and suggested many problems for future research, such, for example, as the meaning of inspiration, the growth of the canon of Scripture, and the relation of the teaching of Jesus to the later doctrinal development in the Creeds.

Herder, poet, philosopher, theologian, founder with Lessing of German national literature, continued Lessing's work. For him, as for Lessing, history was a continuous whole and the world a unity under its various manifestations. Humanity is one of his favourite terms. It signifies human interests and activities in the totality of their historical evolution. God, while not identical with the sum of material and spiritual phenomena, he regarded as immanent in them all; so that, in interpreting them, we are interpreting Him. Herder, as we have seen, lays great, we may say excessive, emphasis upon the part played by physical surroundings in man's development. Unlike Kant, who opposed ethical man to nature, Herder includes man in nature, and regards all forms of development as natural processes. The leading thought of the *Ideas for a Philosophy of History* is, that spirit is everywhere closely conditioned by physical organisation, and that the key to man's evolution is to be found in his environment. With Lessing he sees in nature an ascending series of which man is the crowning term. A genetic method, therefore, is necessary for the interpretation of nature and history. But in applying this method Herder tends to explain the process in terms of its earliest stages, instead of making the end the interpretation of the beginning. Two facts account for this tendency, the influence of Rousseau and his own poetic and artistic impulses. Rousseau put the Golden Age of humanity in the past. Civilisation he regarded as a departure from the true ideal of human life. He would fain return to the free, simple, natural life of primitive man, as he fondly idealised it. This conception precisely suited Herder's temper of mind. His genetic method had taught him that he must investigate the past if he would understand the present, and when he began his investigation he found in the poetry of the past something which vividly appealed to his imaginative sympathies. In national popular songs and ballads, in Homer, in Hebrew poetry, and in the early poetry of the

North, he saw expressed humanity's fresh native instincts and aspirations. In a nation's primitive poetry he found the free creation of the nation's individuality. Lessing had urged his countrymen to give up copying French models in their literature, and pointed to the classics as examples for imitation. Herder would have them be themselves, and copy no one. His poetic feeling and his love of early poetry thus held him back from doing full justice to the idea of development. But he helped to lay the foundation of the historical and comparative methods. Hume had made fear the root of religion. Herder saw that such an explanation was superficial and untrue. Religion was natural to man. It is born, he taught, of awe and wonder, and represents primitive man's attempt to explain the phenomena of the world around him and his own spiritual experiences. Hence in every nation it is closely connected with mythology and early national poetry. Mythology is the natural form with which primitive theology clothes itself, and with mythology poetry goes hand in hand. Both are of the highest importance, for both are stages in God's self-revelation. Herder was the stout opponent of the rationalist reduction of religion to morality, and in place of the negations of the Enlightenment suggested fruitful principles for the construction of a philosophy of religion.

We may say, then, that Herder made a twofold contribution to the growth of Biblical criticism. He brought the Bible into relation with general literature. He emphasized its national character, and taught men to see in it a growth which reflected the general mind of the people and their special traditions. He also directed inquiry to the early literature of the Hebrews, where were to be found those elements of myth and poetry which were in all nations the first natural expression of their spiritual life.[1] Herder valued the Bible intensely, and was a genuine student of it. The Bible was for him the divinest, because the most human of books. But inspiration and revelation, he insisted, were not confined to one people, nor were they to be mechanically or supernaturally interpreted. Revelation was the immanent working of God upon the whole spiritual being of man. Inspiration was the God-given insight which

[1] Cp. his *The Voices of the Peoples*, 1778, a free translation of popular songs and ballads; and *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, 1782.

made men, in all ages and among all peoples, grasp that portion of divine truth which was adapted to their needs. The supernatural for Herder is the natural intensified. It is not unfair to say that his appreciation of the Bible is, in the main, æsthetic. In his desire to unify all the spiritual powers of man, he lost sight, as Pünjer points out, of the differentia of religion and of the peculiarly religious qualities of the Bible.[1] Herder follows Lessing in drawing a distinction between the religion of Jesus and the Christianity of orthodox theology, finding in the former a spontaneity and simplicity which delighted him. And he urges men to go back to the original sources of the Gospel and search its early records if they would clear their minds of error. It may be noted, too, that in his study of the synoptic problem he had reached the conclusion that Mark's narrative was the earliest of the three.

Niebuhr in the field of history, Savigny in that of law, applied and developed the historical method. Niebuhr's *History of Rome* not only marked an epoch in the study of its particular subject, but powerfully affected the whole future course of investigation. A generation of later students, Thomas Arnold among them, looked to Niebuhr as their teacher and inspirer. His work breathed a spirit of genuine historical research, showed the proper use of original sources and authorities, and drew attention to the presence of myth and legend in primitive tradition. The suggestion which he made that early Roman history was the prose rendering of still earlier national ballad poetry was capable of a wider application. Might not the same be true of the early Biblical narratives? Must we not there too allow for the operation of the mythopœic tendency? The same line of argument was taken by Friedrich Wolf. In his *Prolegomena to Homer* (1795) he had maintained that the Homeric poems consisted of a number of short lays or ballads, which were subsequently combined together in the time of Peisistratus. If there could be floating national ballads in Greece, could the possibility of them in Palestine be legitimately excluded? Niebuhr was essentially a critical historian, and his standard of criticism was severe. By criticism he meant, not the application to past events of any shallow or arbitrary criticism, but the recognition of the immense com-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 605–607.

plexity of the factors which make up history, and the patient endeavour to give to each factor its due place and weight.

Savigny applied to law the principles of a sound historical criticism. He showed that the history of law was the record of a continuous development, and that this growth was no accidental thing, but was vitally connected with the whole of a nation's life. A nation's laws were the expression of the national character, reflecting, and in turn modifying, its tendencies and ideals. In his volume *On the Vocation of our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence* (1814) he protested against the attempt to reach a supposed "law of nature" by searching for the common residue left, after abstraction had been made of all special peculiarities in legal codes. The history and true significance of law could never be understood, if this barren abstract method were followed. In the same spirit he protested against the imposition on the German States of the Code Napoléon. Any unity so reached could only be artificial. The legislation of a nation must grow out of the life of the nation. Savigny, even more truly than Niebuhr, may be called the creator of a school. Along with Eichhorn and Göschen he founded in 1815 the *Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Rechtswissenschaft* as the organ of the new historical method. He held the chair of Roman Law in the University of Berlin. Niebuhr and Eichhorn were also professors of the same University at the same time. The friendship of the three men, who were all inspired by similar ideals of study, gave an immense impetus to the new movement of historical research.

So much may be said by way of introduction. We have now to try to give some more detailed account of the story of Biblical criticism in Germany, in order that we may grasp at any rate the outlines of the critical movement on the Continent, as it developed during the first thirty-five or forty years of the century. Without some such summary we can hardly hope to understand the course of criticism in England.

The year 1835 is a turning-point in the history of Biblical criticism. It saw the publication of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*,[1] a book whose wide influence showed itself in three main

[1] Vol. i. came out in 1834.

directions. In the first place, the extravagances of this volume, and the negative character of most of its conclusions, startled the religious public, made Biblical criticism a subject of common talk, and so helped to bring it down from its academic heights into the homes of men. The *Life of Jesus* was not a popular work, as was the later *Life of Jesus for the German People*, which Strauss published in 1864 with the avowed object of summarising for the general reader the results of criticism.[1] Strauss himself wrote of the former book: "For the laity the subject is certainly not adequately prepared; and for this reason the present work is so framed, that at least the unlearned among them will quickly and often perceive that the book is not destined for them."[2] But, as I have said, it created a widespread unrest, which was intensified when in 1846 George Eliot translated it into English.[3] In the second place, scholars, confronted with the volume, began to realise how little had been done in the way of New Testament criticism, compared with the results achieved in the study of the Old Testament. Speculative Christologies had been numerous, but the historical Christ had been left alone or taken for granted, What was needed, and came about as a result of this bold challenge, was a careful investigation of the primitive records of Christianity, a true historical criticism of the New Testament. Thirdly, the publication of the book increased the opposition between the orthodox and naturalistic schools of criticism, and brought into fresh prominence the problem of miracle and the supernatural. Rationalist theologians, with Paulus at their head, had for some time been applying their criticism to the Gospels, but the forced nature of their exegesis, and the absurdity of many of their conclusions, were sufficient to prove the inadequacy of their method, and the need of a better one. Paulus, while rejecting the orthodox view that the Gospels contained supernatural history, agreed with the orthodox that they contained history,

[1] Strauss in this work avoids detailed discussions of problems. He gives instead a summary of the general results of criticism, and supplements the earlier volume with an investigation into the written sources of the Gospel story.

[2] Preface to the first German edition.

[3] There had been an earlier translation, issued in numbers, at a cheap rate, which had had a wide circulation.

and that a kernel of historical fact lay concealed in all the events which they described. To reduce that history to a record of actual facts explicable by natural causes, and to explain away, by accounting for its origin, whatever of the marvellous or miraculous there might be in the narrative, was their avowed aim. The criticism of Strauss struck deeper. He questioned the initial assumption, that nothing but fact, however embellished, was to be found in the Gospels, and bade men look there for myth, poetry, legend. By boldly applying to the whole life of Jesus his mythical theory, he compelled criticism to undertake a detailed examination of the records, with a view to determining what could be regarded as fact and what as the product of an idealising tendency in the mind of the writer. The vigour of his attack helped to create a new apologetic, even though for a time it gave fresh life to naturalistic interpretations.

The same year, 1835, saw also the publication of Vatke's *Biblical Theology*, in which the conception of development in history, derived from Lessing and Herder, and reinforced by Hegel, was systematically applied to the religion of Israel. Earlier critics of the Old Testament had used the conception, but Vatke made it the central principle of his exegesis, and so put in the forefront of inquiry the idea which was to govern the criticism of the future. He subjects the national traditions of Israel to a penetrating criticism, and shows that many of those which relate to the earliest period of the nation's life are of later origin, and are therefore not always to be trusted. He affirms that the law of development from lower to higher, which characterises the growth of other nations, is true of Israel. This necessitates a revision of our view of the order of Israel's religious and political evolution. We cannot, for example, hold that Moses gave the nation a fully developed civil law or theology.[1] Vatke (1806–82), it is important to remember, was a profound student of philosophy before he began his researches into the Old Testament. Hegel's influence upon him was enormous. The *Biblical Theology* would never have seen the light, had it not been for Vatke's thorough

[1] For an account of Vatke, cp. Pfleiderer's *Development of Theology*, pp. 252–256. Also the section in Cheyne's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*. I should like here to acknowledge my debt to this book.

acceptance of Hegelian teaching on the philosophy of history. Vatke himself confesses this, by prefacing the work with philosophical speculations on religion and its evolution, couched in the Hegelian terminology. These speculations mystified and repelled would-be readers of the book, which consequently had at the time less influence on the general public than it deserved. It was left for a later generation to discern the true worth of Vatke's method and conclusions.

Mention must also be made of yet one more book issued in this same year, F. C. Baur's treatise on the *Pastoral Epistles*,[1] in which the author shows that criticism of primitive Christianity must concern itself, not only with documentary analysis, but with the whole environment of life and thought in which the Christian community developed. Christianity, while it exercised a formative influence on its surroundings, was also coloured by them, and it was the duty of the historian to trace this reciprocal interaction. The problem, as Baur showed, was far more complex than critics had hitherto realised. It could be solved only by the careful application of the historico-critical method in its completeness.

As we look back over the early movement of Biblical criticism in Germany, we are struck by the comparative poverty of the criticism of the New Testament. One reason for this poverty, as has been already indicated, was the dominance of speculative Christologies. Men were dazzled by the variety and brilliancy of these philosophical constructions, and had not yet learned that the only sure basis for a theory of Christ's Person was to be found in patient, historical research. Again, the orthodox theologians of the eighteenth century had inherited from the seventeenth century the love of dogmatic system which has been a characteristic of Protestant Churches. Their concern was more with dogma than with the historical facts of Christianity; or, if they were concerned with these facts, they were hampered in their investigations of them by a mechanical theory of inspiration which precluded any true literary criticism of the documents of the New Testament.

Some work, however, had been done on the synoptic problem, and on the question of the formation of the canon of Scripture. Between 1804 and 1814 Eichhorn (1752–1827) had published

[1] *Über die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe.*

his *Introduction to the New Testament*, in which he propounded the fertile hypothesis of a primitive source, or *Urevangelium*, which the various synoptic writers utilised, each for his own purpose.[1] Gieseler (1792–1854), accepting the theory of a common tradition, regarded that tradition as oral. Griesbach (1745–1812) maintained that Mark was made up of extracts from Luke and Matthew; and with this opinion Schleiermacher agreed, thus showing less insight than Herder, who had already noted the priority of Mark. Schleiermacher, while allowing a place to oral tradition, thought that the synoptic narratives were made up by the combination of several short, written accounts of the life of Jesus, and so represented an aggregation of pre-existing material. Of this material he held that the oldest and most authentic portion consisted of the didactic sayings of Christ.

In the matter of the canon, the march of free inquiry had been hindered by conceptions of canonicity which tended to remove the books of the New Testament from investigation by ordinary literary criticism. Semler (1725–1791) indeed had already argued that there was no evidence that the compilers of the canon were specially inspired, and that the word "canonical" carried with it no association of miraculous selection or preservation; but the opposing view of some peculiar sanctity attaching to a canonical book continued to be maintained. Eichhorn did good service in tracing the gradual growth of the canon, but it was Schleiermacher, more than any else, who helped to dispel false opinions as to canonicity and inspiration.

With regard to the Fourth Gospel, criticism was in the curious position of accepting it as perhaps the earliest, and certainly the most authentic, account of the life of Jesus, written by the apostle St. John as an eye-witness of the events described. Bretschneider (1776–1848), it is true, had in 1820 attacked this assumption in his *Probabilia*.[2] Assuming the historical credibility of the first three Gospels, he questioned the historicity of the fourth, on the ground that it was so

[1] Lessing, in his *New Hypothesis*, had suggested that both the canonical and uncanonical Gospels sprang from an original Gospel, represented in the first instance by the Gospel of the Hebrews, and ultimately by St. Matthew.

[2] *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine.*

different from the others. But his book came out, just when a reaction had begun in favour of a religion of feeling and sentiment, and so had little immediate effect upon critical opinion.[1] The authority and influence of Schleiermacher were in the main responsible for the opinions held about this Gospel, but his view of the book was not based on historical criticism, but was an outcome of his general theology, and of the romantic strain in his nature which found a sympathetic affinity in the portrayal of the Johannine Christ.[2] Weisse did something in his *History of the Gospels* (1838) to determine the relation of the fourth Gospel to the other three, but it was Baur who first, in an essay on St. John (1844), made it clear that, if the question of its historical character was to be determined, the purpose and idea of the author in writing it must be taken into account.

Criticism was also beginning to busy itself with the Epistles and the Apocalypse. Eichhorn questioned the genuineness of II Peter and Jude, and the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. De Wette agreed with him, and doubted also the authenticity of Ephesians and Revelation. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, accepted as genuine II Timothy and Titus, but readily admitted the presence in the New Testament of pseudonymous writings. But, speaking in broad terms, we may say, that the historical criticism of the New Testament had not yet—that is, up to about the year 1840—reached the position of an organised movement. It lacked careful method and settled canons of judgment, though it had begun to see where the problems lay which were to exercise critical ingenuity for many years to come. Invaluable work, however, had been done by scholars, such as Wettstein, Michaelis, Ernesti, Griesbach, in the field of grammar, philology, and investigation of the text of the New Testament; and the material collected by this "lower" criticism was indispensable for the later growth of "higher," or literary and historical, criticism.

Matters, however, were very different in respect of the Old Testament. Here a more sympathetic and continuous critical

[1] Cp. Mackay's *The Tübingen School and its Antecedents*, p. 121.

[2] Cp. the words of Strauss in *The Life of Jesus for the German People*, p. 120 "The whole generation, which had grown up in Romanticism and the combined philosophy of Fichte and Schelling, found the mystic ideal Gospel of John more suitable to their views than the historical realism of the first three."

movement took place, which, beginning with Eichhorn,[1] was carried on (to mention only the more important names) by Ilgen, De Wette, Gesenius, Vatke, Ewald. Three features of this movement stand out. First, it was founded on exact scholarship and minute research. In place of *a priori* methods we find critical analysis of documents, and careful grammatical and philological inquiry. Secondly, there quickly grew up among the critics a broad unanimity as to general principles and larger conclusions. Hengstenberg (1802–1869) stands almost alone in his settled opposition to the new criticism. Thirdly, a genuine religious motive inspired the majority of these early critics. Their criticism is reverent. They were not there to destroy, but to construct. Most of them, and certainly the greatest, were filled with a spirit very different from either pure scepticism or the narrow rationalism of the Enlightenment. For them the Bible was a book replete with spiritual life and teaching, and in the history of the Hebrews they felt that they were tracing out the gradual self-revelation of God to humanity. They were men of wide interests and sympathies, familiar, for the most part, with philosophy and literature. Their breadth of vision saved them from pedantry and dryness.[2]

The main results of Old Testament criticism in these early years may be summarised as follows:—(*a*) The problem of the Pentateuch was attacked, and its composite character recognised. Eichhorn, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pointed out

[1] I have taken Eichhorn as the starting-point of the criticism of the Old Testament, because, unhampered by any theory of a peculiar sanctity attaching to canonical writings, he frankly treats Scripture as literature. He is aware, too, that the higher, as contrasted with the lower criticism, had hardly begun. But the particular problem of the Pentateuch had exercised the minds of writers before Eichhorn. For example, Simon in 1678, in his *Critical History of the Old Testament*, had pointed out the existence of duplicate narratives in Genesis, and of differences of style. Simon was a Roman Catholic Oratorian priest. In 1753 another Roman Catholic, a doctor, by name Astruc, had called attention to the use in Genesis of the two divine names Jehovah and Elohim, and had argued that there were two main documents, each of which again might be composite, which were combined together in the book. Spinoza, too, deserves mention, first, on account of his bold conjecture that Ezra was the author of the Pentateuch in its present form; secondly, because he insisted that no preconceived theory of inspiration should hinder the application to the Biblical writings of an unfettered literary and historical criticism.

[2] Cheyne, in *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, succeeds, in a delightful manner, in making the personality of these critics live before us.

the existence in Genesis of two documents, distinguishable both by style and ideas, which he argued were combined at the end of the Mosaic age.[1] The four later books of the Pentateuch he considered were formed out of separate writings of Moses and his contemporaries. He defended the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, though he admitted the possibility of later additions to Genesis. Ilgen (1763–1834) was the first to show that there were three separate writers in Genesis, two of whom used the divine name Elohim. He held that Genesis was a compilation from documents or archives preserved in the temple at Jerusalem, but saw that much research was necessary before any sure conclusions could be reached about the history of Hebrew literature. De Wette (1780–1849) argued in 1805[2] that Deuteronomy was later than the rest of the Pentateuch, and placed the composition of the main portion of it in the reign of Josiah. He noted clear traces in the Pentateuch of a progressive development of ritual and worship. By comparing the books of Samuel and Kings with Chronicles, he showed that the laws of Moses were unknown to post-Mosaic historians, and that the Pentateuch could not be regarded as an authority for the period which it describes, but only for the period in which it was compiled; the narrative of the earlier period being idealised by the projection into it of ideas and conditions representative of a later time. De Wette by this striking contribution to the problem gave an immense impetus to historical criticism, and for many years influenced the critics who succeeded him. But, as Wellhausen pointed out,[3] historical criticism in De Wette had outrun literary. Hence came a reaction, led by Bleek and Ewald, who set themselves to examine more minutely the structure of the Pentateuch, and the relation of its parts.[4]

[1] Astruc had earlier shown the existence of the two documents; but Eichhorn seems to have reached the same conclusion independently.

[2] In a treatise written for his doctor's degree at Jena.

[3] Cp. the article "Pentateuch" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

[4] The results of this inquiry were as follows:—The older Fragmentary hypothesis of Geddes was abandoned (*a*), and its place taken by the Supplementary hypothesis, which regarded the Elohist sections of the Pentateuch as the primary narrative, this being subsequently supplemented by the narrative of the Jehovist writer. This view obtained general assent till Hupfeld in 1853 threw new light

(*a*) Cp. the next chapter.

(*b*) Hebrew grammar and philology were carefully investigated in themselves, and in connection with other Semitic languages. Here the place of honour belongs to Gesenius (1785–1842) and Ewald (1803–1875). Gesenius's *Hebrew Grammar*, *History of the Hebrew Language*, and *Lexicon Manuale* have provided all later scholars with materials indispensable for their work. Ewald's *Kritische Grammatik* had also much influence, while his studies in Arabic were an important factor in the spread of the comparative method. Thorough work of this kind was not only the necessary preliminary for the investigation of Hebrew literature, but put an end to the fashion of arbitrary textual criticism.

(*c*) Certain general principles were steadily winning their way to acceptance, and later criticism has entirely confirmed them. One such was the principle, first grasped by Eichhorn, that the documents of the Old Testament have undergone a process of constant re-editing, and hence are frequently composite in character. Allowance has everywhere to be made for the modifying influence of national tradition. Following on this was the principle, emphasized by De Wette in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, that the title of a work is no proof that the traditional author was the real author. David, as he pointed out, stands in the Psalter for a collective name. The third and most important principle was the recognition that Israel's religion was a gradual development, reaching its maturity in the prophets, and that for its understanding a genetic method was essential. Vatke, as we have seen, gave to this thought its clearest expression, but it also inspired Ewald in his *Poetical Books of the Old Testament*, and has proved itself the most fruitful of all critical principles, Again, we trace a growing appreciation of the Old Testament as a literature, in respect both of its form and spirit. Herder's love of primitive poetry is reflected in Ewald's early studies of the

upon the subject. Joshua was included as part of the Pentateuch, and the Elohistic sections of Genesis were seen to be vitally connected with the legislation of the middle books of the Pentateuch (*b*).

(*b*) It may be mentioned that Vatke in his *Biblical Theology* agreed that the Elohistic document in its present form could not be earlier than the Exile, but he later changed his opinion, and maintained that it was prior to the Jehovistic document and to Deuteronomy.

Hebrew poets, and in what Cheyne has called his unique "emotional sympathy with the psalmists." This sympathetic insight was to come to a fruitage riper than that of Herder in Ewald's work *The Prophets*, and in his *History of the People of Israel;* riper, because, while Herder had a keen æsthetic appreciation of the Bible, he lacked Ewald's deeper religious feeling. Anyone who would do justice to the Old Testament can never separate its religious teaching from the literary form in which it is cast. The growth of historical and literary criticism in the hands of such writers as Ewald gradually opened men's eyes to the immense spiritual wealth of the Old Testament. With an understanding of the way in which the literature had grown up came a feeling for its beauties, and an appreciation of its varied spiritual message, which have made the Bible live, as it has, perhaps, never lived before.

Finally, as criticism developed, broader views of inspiration won their way to acceptance. Reference has already been made to the teaching of Lessing and Herder on this matter; but the name of Semler must not be forgotten. He was one of the first to insist upon the need for distinguishing between the spiritual message of the Bible and the local forms in which that message was cast. Inspiration was concerned with the former, not with the latter. A book was not divine because it was put in the canon. It was put in the canon because men recognised its spiritual worth. With the exception of Hengstenberg, all the critics whom we have mentioned laid emphasis upon the human element in the Bible. The presence of this element made the Bible amenable to treatment by the ordinary canons of literary and historical criticism.

CHAPTER X

THE RISE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN ENGLAND

Various influences were at work to block the advance of Biblical criticism in England at the opening of the nineteenth century. There was, in the first place, a general indifference to learning on the part of the clergy. Learned theologians were, indeed, to be found among the Orthodox, but, taken as a whole, theology shared in the eclipse which had settled upon culture generally, both at the universities and outside. Thomas Arnold's complaint that in his day there was no science of Biblical Theology in England applied with still greater force to the years 1800–1825. Almost all the clergy were ignorant of German, and had no knowledge of the results which criticism had achieved. Again, the effect of the French Revolution had been to make men suspicious of any novelty. They rallied to the traditional teaching of the Church as a bulwark against the advancing tide of infidelity. They felt that, at all costs, the authority, whether of the Church or the Scriptures, must be maintained. But the chief obstacle was the traditional view of the Bible as a volume inspired throughout from cover to cover, whose statements, whether they related to science, or history, or religion, were to be accepted without questioning. The Bible was treated as something apart from all other writings. Its various books were regarded as being all on the same level of inspiration, and as having been produced under a divine superintendence which protected them from any material error. Even a man of such large mind as Van Mildert could write that in the Bible "it is impossible even to imagine a failure, either in judgment or in integrity";[1] and could argue that the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel was designed to prevent the mixing of true believers with idolaters and

[1] Bampton Lectures, 1814, *An Inquiry into the General Principles of Scripture Interpretation*, p. 158, 3rd edition.

atheists, and that the mark set on Cain was "probably some miraculous change in his external appearance, transmitted to his posterity, and serving as a memorial of the first apostacy from true religion."[1]

The theory of a literal, verbal inspiration was probably not largely held; its place was taken by a theory of plenary inspiration, or an inspiration of superintendence which preserved the Scriptures from all mistakes except very minor contradictions, or the errors of copyists. Theologians, however, had never thought out the implications of their views. Van Mildert, for example, leaves us uncertain as to the range of the divine control, or the extent to which he will admit the presence of a human element in the Bible. The main object of his Boyle and Bampton Lectures was to defend the authority of the Bible and Revelation. God, he argues, must have secured the record of His revelation from material error. The Biblical writers "constantly received from the Holy Spirit such a degree of assistance as might suffice to give to *every* part of Scripture its sanction and authority, as the word of God."[2] In the Boyle Lectures are indications of a broader outlook, as when, for instance, he admits that there are degrees of inspiration, that the divine character of the Bible is proved by the matter contained in it, rather than by the manner of its conveyance, and that it is impossible to form a clear notion of the extent of the inspiration of the prophets.[3] But I am inclined to think that in the Bampton Lectures, in his desire to defend from any attack the whole system of Church doctrine, he recedes somewhat from his earlier and more liberal opinions. Van Mildert was aware of the existence of critical theories. He mentions the views of Alexander Geddes, but only to condemn them. He can see in them nothing but "the most unwarrantable liberties" taken with the sacred writings, in order to reconcile them with the prejudices of philosophical unbelievers.[4]

The following beliefs were generally accepted: (*a*) Adam was a historical person to whom had been given a primitive revela-

[1] Boyle Lectures, 1802–5—*An Historical View of the Rise and Progress of Infidelity, with a Refutation of its Principles and Reasonings.* Sermon xxi.

[2] *Boyle Lectures*, p. 395.

[3] *Ibid.*, Sermons xxii. and xxiii.

[4] *Ibid.*, Sermon xi.

tion.[1] Pagan systems of religion were regarded as "a wilful corruption of Sacred Truth," and a departure from the known will of God as given in the primæval revelation and handed on to later generations.[2] When, as in the case of the rite of sacrifice, there was a parallel between Jewish and heathen usages, it was explained as "a fragment of early revelation, broken off from the system of which it formed a part, and carried down along the stream of time, after its object and purpose had been forgotten."[3] (*b*) Acceptance of any of the results of criticism was equivalent to unsoundness of faith and disloyalty to the Church, and was to be explained by the presence of some moral defect in the critic. (*c*) Miracle and prophecy were the chief evidence for the truth of Christianity, and a proof of inspiration. By prophecy was meant the God-given power of foreseeing future events. What better proof of inspiration could be adduced than the fact that predictions were subsequently fulfilled?

One would antecedently have expected that Biblical exegesis would have been a marked feature of Evangelical theology, seeing that the basis of the Evangelical system was the authority of the written word. But it was not so. Except in the interpretation of prophecy, where they elaborated extravagant views connected with the fulfilment of prediction and the millennium, the Evangelicals did little in the way of exegesis of the Scriptures. The two most famous commentaries of the first quarter of the century, the *Family Bible*, edited by D'Oyly and Mant, and Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study of Holy Scripture*, did not emanate from that school. The former was a popular work, intended as a counterblast to the annotated Bible which was being issued by dissenters, and was mainly homiletical. The latter, a massive and learned production, can hardly be called truly critical in method. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences* (1827–33) was an apologetic work which applied

[1] "It is scarcely possible to doubt that man was instructed immediately after his Fall in the mysteries of Redemption, so far at least as was necessary to enable him to work out his own salvation, and that instituted means were provided for him by a faithful use of which he might attain to eternal life."—*Boyle Lectures*, p. 433.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 433.

[3] J. B. Sumner, *The Evidence of Christianity Derived from its Nature and Reception* (1825), p. 84.

to all the historical books of the Bible Paley's method of proof from the undesigned coincidences in the Pauline Epistles. It belongs to apologetics rather than to criticism.

Two Bampton Lectures of the period perhaps deserve short notice as pointing the way to better things. In 1817 John Miller, with his eye on the growing conflict between theology and geological science, insisted that the appeal of the Bible is primarily spiritual.[1] Scientific statements, he urged form but a very small part of Scripture, whose true authority is moral, and can never be undermined by objections from the side of science.[2] As the older theories of inspiration gave way, it was more clearly seen that the true inspiration of the Biblical writers lay in the moral and religious character of their message.

In 1806 John Brown was the lecturer, and took as his subject the progressive nature of the divine revelation.[3] His principle does not carry him far enough to make him discard the current belief in a primæval revelation, but it enables him to deal with the moral difficulties of the Old Testament—the presence, for example, of low ethical standards which constituted a serious stumbling-block to traditional theories of inspiration. God, he says, was gradually educating the Hebrews. Adam was the recipient of such knowledge of God as was suitable to his condition. It was wrong to regard him as the perfect man. Intellectually and morally he stood far below his descendants.[4]

The traditional view of the Bible was possible, only because theology had not been permeated by the historical spirit. As the historical method grew, the whole conception of revelation changed. It ceased to be regarded as a mechanical thing operating from without at one uniform level, but was thought of as a progressive unfolding of the divine purpose. The conception of inspiration underwent a similar change. Inspiration, if harder to define, became something much more real and living.

Before we pass on to consider the few men in England who

[1] *The Divine Authority of Holy Scripture Asserted, from its Adaptation to the Real State of Human Nature.*

[2] Cp. Lecture iv.: "The practical and moral records of the Bible are the very picture of man." Cp. Keble's lines for St. Bartholomew's Day in *The Christian Year*, which, as the footnote shows, had Miller's lectures directly in view.

[3] Published in 1809 under the title *Sermons.*

[4] Sermon ii.

may truly be called the pioneers and prophets of the coming critical movement, it is necessary to say a little about the influence of geology in promoting Biblical criticism. Geology is a science which can claim a peculiarly British ancestry. The Geological Society was founded early in the nineteenth century by Greenough with the direct object of collecting facts. The ideal of its members was accurate observation in place of the theorising which had up till then been so common. And facts were soon found which conflicted with the current, orthodox view of the literal accuracy of the Biblical records of Creation and the Deluge. Men were driven to ask, whether belief in the Bible as the word of God necessarily implied that all its statements upon every subject were strictly true. Theologians, however, were slow to abandon their traditional opinions. Between 1800 and 1834 four of the Bampton Lecturers dealt with the conflict between science and religion, and three of them, Faber, Nares, and Bidlake, adopted a tone of violent hostility to the new geological discoveries; either denying that the discovered facts were facts, or maintaining that room could still be found for them within the traditional system.[1] It was argued, for example, that the story of the Deluge in Genesis sufficiently explained the presence of marine deposits on mountain-tops or in regions far from the sea. All these lecturers urge that belief in revelation is impossible if the accuracy of the Biblical record is in any respect impugned. Frederick Nolan, the lecturer in 1833, adopted a somewhat less uncompromising attitude.[2] He admitted that the primary object of the Bible was to teach religion, not science, but held, at the same time, that Moses was inspired with enough scientific knowledge to write an account of creation which should in broad outline harmonise with subsequent scientific discovery.

A revolution in geology was effected with the publication of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), though his views met with considerable opposition from many of the leaders

[1] The titles and dates of these lectures are as follows:—1800, Faber, *Horae Mosaicae*: 1805, Nares, *A View of the Evidences of Christianity at the close of the Pretended Age of Reason*; 1811, Bidlake, *The Truth and Consistency of Divine Revelation, with some Remarks on the contrary extremes of Infidelity and Enthusiasm.*

[2] *The Analogy of Revelation and Science Established.*

of scientific thought.[1] Lyell maintained that there was no need to adopt the theory of a succession of violent catastrophes to explain the present state of the earth's surface. Given a sufficiency of time, a uniformitarian theory would account for the facts: the forces now at work modifying the face of the globe were adequate to account for all its past history. Lyell's views had been foreshadowed by Hutton, but Hutton's contribution was forgotten in the excitement aroused by the *Principles*. To Lyell belongs the honour of converting the geological world to the new theory. The belief in catastrophe went hand in hand with the biological doctrine of the fixity of species of which Cuvier was the stoutest upholder. Fixity of species involved a belief in special creation. Either all existing species had remained unchanged since the primal act of creation, or there had been a series of creative acts, by which new forms had been produced to take the place of those destroyed by the cataclysms which rent the earth's crust. The effect of Lyell's teaching was to weaken the belief in special creation and supernatural interference, by showing that the hypothesis of a succession of divine creative acts was unnecessary. Following upon the break-down of the theory of geological catastrophe came the evolutionary theory of organic descent from a common stock. Geologists and biologists both learned the lesson of evolution, and so contributed to the spread of new views about the Bible.

We turn now to the pioneers of Biblical criticism in this country.

Alexander Geddes (1737–1801) is the first to attract our attention.[2] He was a Roman Catholic priest, living near Aberdeen, a scholar, and a man of liberal theological opinions. He had been engaged for some time on a new translation of the Bible with critical notes, of which volume i. was published

[1] *E.g.* from Cuvier, Sedgwick, Buckland. It is an open question how far some of the geologists who opposed Lyell were influenced by the traditional theology.

[2] A fuller narrative of the history of Biblical criticism would deal with the work of still earlier investigators, such as Warburton, Lowth, Parrish, and Thomas Hobbes. Geddes, however, is the first really important name in the story of detailed criticism of the Old Testament. Cp. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 3–13.

in 1792, and volume ii. in 1797.[1] In 1800 he published *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures, corresponding with a New Translation of the Bible.* He boldly asserted that the Pentateuch in its present form could not be the work of Moses, though it contained, he thought, Mosaic documents. He places its composition in the reign of Solomon, holding, however, that there were passages in it which pointed to insertion at a still later date. Of inspiration he took a broad view, refusing to limit it to the Jewish Scriptures, and arguing that many difficulties which the narrower theory had to face would vanish, if the Bible were not treated as something entirely different from all other literatures.[2] Geddes is important, not only as an early champion of the right of free inquiry, who went on with his work, undeterred by the threats and punishments of his ecclesiastical superiors, but because of his influence upon Eichhorn and Vater in Germany. Eichhorn spoke of him with the highest respect, and Vater in his *Commentary on the Pentateuch* translated portions of the *Critical Remarks*, and supported his hypothesis, that Genesis contained not only two separate documents, but a large number of fragments which had been combined into a whole at some later date. Geddes, however, like Marsh of whom I next speak, had little influence upon English theology. The mind of the age was not ripe for the reception of these new opinions. A long period was still to elapse before any real stirring of the stagnant waters took place.

Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Llandaff (1816–19), and of Peterborough (1819–35), was unquestionably one of the ablest theologians and Biblical scholars of his day. He had the distinction of being one of the very few writers in England who possessed a knowledge of German or any familiarity with German scholarship; and he was the first in this country to raise clearly the problem of the composition and correlation of the Synoptic Gospels. Subsequent investigators looked back to him as one of their chief inspirers. Thirlwall, for example, expressly states that he is taking up the problem of inspiration at the point

[1] *The Holy Bible, or the Books accounted sacred by Jews and Christians, faithfully translated from corrected Texts of the Originals, with Various Readings, Explanatory Notes, and Critical Remarks.*

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., Preface.

where Marsh left it.[1] Marsh was a Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, and in 1807 became Margaret Professor of Divinity in that University. While holding the chair, he delivered and published a voluminous course of lectures which covered almost the entire ground of theology.[2] The lectures show his immense learning, particularly in the history of Biblical scholarship, his analytical faculty, and his power of penetrating to the heart of a problem. They contain much which can be read with profit to-day. We are not, however, directly concerned with these, but rather with the controversy which arose between Marsh and Randolph, Bishop of Oxford.

Marsh had studied at Leipsic under Michaelis, and had also corresponded with Griesbach on the text of the New Testament. In 1793 he published a translation of Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament* with notes of his own; and in 1801 followed this up with a volume on *The Origin and Composition of the Three First Canonical Gospels*.[3] In this he discusses the synoptic problem, and offers as a solution the following hypothesis. All three writers used a common Hebrew document, but none had knowledge of any Gospel but his own. Matthew wrote in Hebrew, and retained in that language what he took from the common source. Mark and Luke translated into Greek what they borrowed. The two latter had in addition to the Hebrew original, a Greek translation of it. Whoever translated Matthew's Hebrew Gospel into Greek got help from Mark when Mark had matter in common with Matthew, and when there was no such common matter used Luke. The sources to which Matthew had access were composed of communications derived from the Apostles themselves.

It was an attempt to show that a real problem existed, that it lay in the very structure of the Gospels, being evoked by their joint similarities and discrepancies, and that for its solution a critical investigation of the text of the narrative was necessary, which should be free from all *a priori* theorising, and should follow the methods of ordinary historical criticism.

[1] Cp. *Letters Literary and Theological of C. Thirlwall*, edited by Perowne and Stokes, p. 76.

[2] *A Course of Lectures containing a Description and Systematic Arrangement of the Several Branches of Divinity.* Delivered between 1809–1823.

[3] This appeared as a separate book, but was really volume iv. of his work on the New Testament.

Such an inquiry raised at once the question of the meaning of inspiration. Marsh deals with this, and, while he admits that a belief in verbal inspiration is untenable, maintains that there is nothing in his views which is inconsistent with a belief in the inspiration of the writers.[1] In his lectures at Cambridge he lays down the maxim, that the same critical principles should be applied to the Bible which were applied to any other literature; but it is difficult to see how he could reconcile such a view with his belief in "a never-ceasing superintendence to guard the evangelists from error."

Randolph in 1802 attacked Marsh in an anonymous publication entitled *Remarks on Michaelis and his Commentator*, to which Marsh in the same year replied. The controversy continued for two more years,[2] and there can be no question that the victory lay with Marsh, the bishop having neither the knowledge nor, we must add, the fairness of mind, to deal with the subject. Randolph's criticism ignored the central point at issue, the existence of a problem raised by the very structure of the narratives. It was no question, as the bishop tried to maintain, of minutiæ which could be left alone; nor was the difficulty to be settled by any appeal to ecclesiastical tradition, or by assertions that Marsh's views were derogatory to the Holy Spirit. When he writes that Marsh reduces the evangelists to "the mere copiers of copyists, the compilers from former compilations, from a farrago of Gospels or parts of Gospels, of unknown authority everyone of them," he convicts himself of having misunderstood his opponent; for, as we have seen, Marsh contended that Matthew used first-hand sources, consisting of communications from the apostles themselves.[3]

[1] He quotes with approval Warburton's opinion that the Holy Spirit operated on the writers "by watching over them incessantly, but with so suspended a hand as permitted the use, and left them to the guidance of their own faculties, while they kept clear of error, and then only interposing when without the divine assistance they would have been in danger of falling."

[2] Marsh's reply, 1802, is called *Six Letters to the Author of "Remarks, &c."* In 1803 Marsh published *Illustrations of the Hypothesis proposed in the Dissertation on the Origin, &c.* In 1804 Randolph published a *Supplement to "Remarks on Michaelis' Introduction"* in answer to the *Illustrations*. Marsh replied in 1805 with *Defence of the "Illustrations, &c."*

[3] It must, however, be confessed that Marsh did not prove himself as liberal in other matters as he did in criticism. His episcopal policy was narrow in the extreme, and he showed great unfairness to the Evangelicals. Cp. Hunt's *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 33–36.

In 1825 appeared a translation into English of Schleiermacher's *A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, by Connop Thirlwall, who prefaced the work with an Introduction in which he gave an account of the progress of the controversy respecting the origin of the synoptic Gospels since the publication of Marsh's first volume. Thirlwall was well aware of the boldness of his action in introducing to the public a thinker so unorthodox as Schleiermacher. German theology, so far as Englishmen had any knowledge of it, was regarded as a thing absolutely abhorrent. "It would almost seem," says Thirlwall, "as if at Oxford the knowledge of German subjected a divine to the same suspicion of heterodoxy which we know was attached some centuries back to the knowledge of Greek."[1] Even sixteen years later he felt obliged to write thus to a correspondent:—"There is no English theological journal connected with the Church, which does not *studiously* keep its readers in the dark as to everything that is said and done in German theology."[2] But he saw the change which was coming, and ranged himself on the side of free inquiry.

The object of the Introduction was to show that critical views of the Bible were not inconsistent with a belief in an inspiration of superintendence, sufficient to secure the writers from material error. The theory of mechanical inspiration, involving the passivity of the writer, Thirlwall rejects. He adopts a middle position, arguing that we must seek the operation of the Spirit "not in any temporary, physical, or even intellectual changes wrought in its subjects, but in the continual presence and action of what is most vital and essential in Christianity itself."[3] The limits of inspiration, he says, cannot be exactly defined. It was given where it was needed. It was not needed for what fell within the writer's own experience, or was communicated to him by inspired witnesses. Thirlwall praises Schleiermacher for the power of analysis shown in the *Essay*, and for the spirit of impartial criticism which it displays. The main hypothesis of the book, that detached passages in the life of Christ had been committed to writing before the composition of the canonical Gospels, was not new; but

[1] Cp. Introduction to *A Critical Essay*, p. ix.
[2] From a letter of 1841 in *Letters Literary, &c.*, p. 175.
[3] Introd., p. xix.

Schleiermacher was the first to work it out fully. The chance of reaching absolutely certain conclusions in the matter is, Thirlwall admits, remote; but the investigation must be made in a spirit of genuine research. It was a blot on English theology, he felt, that criticism of the Gospels had made such little advance.

In the preparation of the translation and introduction Thirlwall had been helped by Julius Hare. Two years later the two friends published the first volume of their translation of Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, other volumes appearing later. The effect of this work on the general public was far greater than that of the *Essay*. The *Quarterly* attacked it violently, on the ground that Niebuhr's destructive criticism of the early legendary history of Rome was, by a parallel process, being applied to the early narratives of the Bible. Orthodox opinion was becoming thoroughly alarmed; and it was still further angered by the publication in 1830 of Milman's *History of the Jews*, in which the writer seemed to explain away all supernatural occurrences in the Old Testament, and to exalt the human element in the narrative at the expense of the divine. This was not Milman's intention, but it came as a shock to that age to find Jewish history treated as ordinary history is treated, and to hear Abraham called an Arab Sheik.

John Davison, one of the famous sons of Oriel, may be linked with Thomas Arnold as having done much to bring about a more intelligent appreciation of Hebrew prophecy. His Warburtonian lectures on the *Nature and History of Prophecy* (1819–20) set a new standard of interpretation in the subject. His assertion that "what is merely ingenious or subtle in the exposition of Prophecy has little chance of being useful or true" cut at the roots of the fanciful treatment of the prophets which was current, particularly among the Evangelicals. In place of these fantastic speculations Davison makes a careful examination of the whole structure and scope of prophecy. He sees that prediction was only one element in prophecy, that the prophet was a moral and religious teacher, bringing a message from God to his own age, and that it is a mistake to try to find in every prophecy a Christian reference. Criticism to-day would certainly charge Davison with laying too much emphasis on prediction, and on the fulfilment of

prediction as the test of a prophet's inspiration.[1] But it would cordially agree with his remark that prophecy "is not a collection of isolated predictions; but it is, in several parts, a connected order of predictive revelation carried on under distinct branches."[2] Davison saw that prophecy was an organic movement, and that, by treating it as such, and in its relation to the broad fulfilment which it received in the life and teaching of Christ, the apologist possessed a more powerful weapon than any handled by the older school of writers. He is careful, again, to distinguish between what he calls the temporal element in prophecy, and the Evangelical, or Christian, element. The prophet, in a word, spoke primarily for his own age, and the conditions of that age, social, political, historical, naturally coloured his pictures of the future. Problems of date and authorship are only slightly treated by Davison. It was not his object to discuss these literary questions, which at that time had not received the prolonged investigation which has since been given to them. What he desired to do, and succeeded in doing, was to make the study of prophecy more living, and to show that the prophetic movement must be examined as a whole, if it was to be understood.

Brief mention may be made of the controversy between H. J. Rose and Pusey. The former, in his capacity of Christian Advocate at Cambridge, had preached four sermons before the University in 1825 in which he condemned Protestant theology in Germany, and attributed its rationalistic character to the absence of a controlling ecclesiastical authority. Had the German Protestants been under episcopal superintendence, or had their ministers been subject to some binding power, such as the XXXIX Articles impose upon the clergy of the Church of England, they would, in Rose's opinion, have been saved from the disastrous results which the spirit of rationalism has brought about. In 1828 Pusey published a thoughtful essay upon German theology, in which he showed that the growth of rationalism was due to causes far deeper than those assigned by Rose.[3] He pointed out that rationalism was only a phase

[1] *E.g.* on p. 17 he writes: "The fulfilment of its predictions, no doubt, is the decisive test of its Inspiration."

[2] P. 72.

[3] *An Historical Inquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character lately predominant in the Theology of Germany.*

in a complex intellectual movement which was powerfully influencing theology. Its roots stretched back to the Reformation; and it must be studied in its connection with all the varied spiritual forces of the age. Pusey possessed a real acquaintance with German theology. He went to Göttingen in 1825 to study, and was the friend and correspondent of Tholuck, Ewald, Schleiermacher, and Sack. In the battle which ensued, waged with great bitterness by Rose, but with calmness and breadth of view by Pusey, the triumph was overwhelming for the latter. Rose stood as the defender of authority; Pusey would temper authority with free inquiry. Pusey was master of his subject; Rose was not. But, alas, Pusey's liberalism was not destined to ripen further. The most learned of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, he became a rigid defender of authority, and abandoned the broader thought of his earlier days. The importance of his essay in the present connection is that it defends a more liberal view of inspiration. He points out that the Lutheran Church was suffering from a false view of inspiration. It assumed that inspiration meant dictation; it regarded all the parts of the Bible as of equal value; and held that in the Old Testament all the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity were to be found. "The Scriptures thus handled, instead of a living Word, could not but become a dead repository of barren technicalities."[1] In opposition to such a theory Pusey is ready to admit, that there is no proof of the inspiration of historical passages which contain no moral or religious teaching; and that the assistance of the Holy Spirit may reasonably be supposed to be confined to the sphere for which it was promised.[2] His anxiety is, lest the evils resulting from the false view in the Lutheran Church should overtake the Church of England.

Neander in a valuable pamphlet, *The Theology of Thomas Arnold*,[3] questions if Arnold's acquaintance with German theology had much direct influence in shaping his theological opinions. These he regards rather as a native growth of his own

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

[2] Pp. 63–65 of Part ii. of the above. Part ii. was published in 1830 under the same title in direct answer to Rose's attack.

[3] A translation of an article originally printed in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, Cambridge, 1846. The occasion was the publication of Stanley's *Life of Arnold*.

mind. This estimate is surely true; for Arnold's chief interest was neither in the construction of speculative systems of theology, nor in the details of literary and textual criticism, in both of which German activity was to the fore. It is as an interpreter of Scripture, and as an exponent of the larger, underlying principles of Biblical exegesis that Arnold made his mark. To this work he brought the traditional English reverence for the Bible and a deep religious feeling, which, while they did not hinder the free play of the critical faculty, preserved him from intellectualism, and gave to his writings a positive and constructive tone. Arnold saw plainly enough that the growth of criticism heralded a revolution in traditional theology, and his desire was that the coming change should be introduced with the least possible loss to faith. He set himself to show that a frank acceptance of the results of criticism in no way impaired, but rather heightened, the essential value of the Bible. His lifelong contact with young minds taught him where the dangers to faith lay, and also the best means of avoiding them. The quality of personality is stamped on every page of his writings. What he taught he had lived out in his own experience. Hence came his peculiar value for an age when increasing acquaintance with the results of criticism was causing much unsettlement in religious belief.

From Niebuhr, for whom he had a profound admiration, and with whom he was personally acquainted, Arnold learned the principles and methods of scientific, historical criticism, and saw that they must be applied to the Bible. He realised the unsatisfactory condition of English theology, particularly in its handling of the Scriptures. Though the proper end of theology was the scientific exposition of Scripture, there existed no science of Scripture as a whole.[1] Texts were torn from their setting, and were interpreted according to the whim of the writer. Theological controversy had narrowed men's minds, and filled them with prejudices and prepossessions. "It is a perilous employment for any man to be perpetually contemplating narrow-mindedness and weakness in conjunction with much of piety and goodness."[2] Arnold pleaded for a wider outlook, for a study of the history and literature of other nations which

[1] Cp. Preface to *Sermons*, vol. iii. p. xxvii.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

would throw light on the Bible itself, and provide the mental training necessary for the theologian.

The key, however, to Arnold's treatment of Scripture is not to be found merely in his frank admission that the Bible must be studied as you would study any other book. The Bible was a vehicle of spiritual truth; and the prime duty of the theologian was to interpret that truth, so that it should live for the men of his own day. In order that this duty might be performed, Arnold insisted that it was essential to distinguish between the original meaning of any passage in Scripture and the meaning which a later age might fairly find in it. Scripture, therefore, was to be interpreted in a double sense, lower or historical, and higher or spiritual.[1] The two meanings, however, were intimately connected. Arnold was no advocate of a fanciful or allegorical interpretation of Scripture. He was calling attention to the fact that general principles underlie the particular events which Scripture records. Those principles have an eternal value, and to separate this from the original local setting of the principles is the work of the theologian.[2] A particular Messianic prophecy, for example, would have reference to the immediate circumstances of the prophet's own day. It might speak of triumph over enemies, Assyrian or Babylonian; it might blend in one spiritual and temporal blessings; it might anticipate the speedy coming of a better time. But the greatness of the prophecy does not belong to its historical form, but rather to its grasp of permanent religious and moral truth—truth equally applicable to the changed conditions of the present. Arnold did much to place the study of prophecy on a sound basis. In opposition to the current view, he insisted that prophecy was not an anticipation of history, but a spiritual movement in which the element of conscious prediction was very small.[3] The prophets were men with a message for their contemporaries, but their words carried a meaning of which they were not fully aware. Prophecy pointed to the future, and received its fulfilment in Christ; but the prediction was, in the main, unconscious, and the fulfilment not one of detail.

[1] Cp. Preface to *Two Sermons on the Interpretation of Prophecy.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Sermon i.

[3] *Ibid.*, Sermon ii., p. 29: "Prophecy is no empty language about matters of other days or other persons, but the answer given by God to the earnest questionings" of human nature.

In his *Essay on the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures*,[1] Arnold lays down certain guiding principles which to-day are commonplaces of exegesis, but were at that time still unfamiliar. He emphasizes, first, the progressive character of the divine revelation, and insists that there could have been no revelation at all unless it had been accommodated to human capacity.[2] Even of Christ it is true that "He must have often spoken as a man who possessed no greater knowledge than the men of that time and country."[3] It does not follow, therefore, that all opinions which Christ did not contradict have divine sanction. The recognition of this principle of accommodation removes many of the difficulties which men have felt with regard to certain incidents in the Old Testament, such as the praise given to Jael's treachery, or the permission of the wholesale slaughter of Canaanites. Inspiration, then, cannot be regarded as either mechanical or inerrant. In giving a revelation, God leaves human faculties in their normal state, "except so far as regards the special message" with which the writer is entrusted.

"Inspiration does not raise a man above his own time, nor make him even in respect to that which he utters when inspired, perfect in goodness and wisdom; but it so overrules his language that it shall contain a meaning more than his own mind was conscious of, and thus gives to it a character of divinity, and a power of perpetual application."

Arnold complains that the religious opinion of the day instantly questioned the integrity of a man's faith if he showed any sympathy with criticism. Literary questions, he urged, had nothing to do with faith. Most of the objections—critical, scientific, chronological, historical—which were brought against the Bible related only to the nature of inspiration, not to the truth of the revelation. There was good ground for revising traditional theories of inspiration; there was none for quoting criticism as being destructive of Christian faith.[4]

[1] Inserted in vol. ii. of the *Sermons*, 1832.

[2] *Essay*, p. 436.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 437.

[4] This was perhaps true of criticism in England in Arnold's time. But as it advanced to a study of the New Testament, and began to concern itself with doctrinal problems, the situation changed. Would Arnold's words hold good, for example, of *Essays and Reviews*?

Enough has been said to show the breadth and insight of Arnold as a Biblical interpreter. His acceptance of criticism saved him from Bibliolatry; his appreciation of the divine side of Scripture saved him from a naturalistic rationalism. His special skill, as Neander pointed out, lay in separating the provinces of science and religion. He saw clearly the danger of specialism in all branches of inquiry, and so pleaded for a liberal education for the theologian.

One other pioneer, the most remarkable of them all, remains to be mentioned. In 1840, four years after the author's death, was published Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*. Coleridge spent a year in Germany between the autumns of 1798–1799. While there he became acquainted with Eichhorn's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, as also with Lessing's tracts, and the fragments of Reimarus which Lessing had published. From Eichhorn Coleridge learned some of the principles of literary criticism of the Bible. From Lessing, whose influence upon him at one period was immense, he received an insight into the meaning of historical development. The seeds thus sown ripened rapidly in a mind ready to receive them. It was not Coleridge's object to lay before the English public the detailed results of the higher criticism, though frequent references to them are scattered over his writings. He probably did not possess the requisite knowledge for such an undertaking. His aim was to show that the Bible, taken as a whole, had nothing to lose, but everything to gain, from the abandonment of the old unhistorical, mechanical view of inspiration, and the substitution for it of a larger and more living conception. Read the Bible as you would read any other book, says Coleridge, and you will find that it is different from any other book, because it satisfies, as no other book does so completely, the deepest needs and aspirations of human nature. "The Bible and Christianity are their own sufficient evidence." [1] "In every generation, and wherever the light of Revelation has shone, men of all ranks, conditions, and states of mind have found in this volume a correspondent for every movement towards the Better felt in their own hearts." [2] "In short, whatever *finds* me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit." [3]

[1] *Confessions*, p. 21 (ed. 1840). [2] *Ibid.*, p. 69. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Coleridge was insisting that the objective revelation embodied in the Bible must be brought into conformity with the subjective revelation in the spirit of man. He points out, that most of the difficulties which men feel about the Bible arise from the illegitimate assumption that inspiration means dictation, and that all parts of the volume are equally inspired. In a fine passage he describes the effect of the current doctrine of plenary inspiration.

"The Doctrine in question petrifies at once the whole body of Holy Writ with all its harmonies and symmetrical gradations. . . . This breathing organism, this *panharmonicum*, which I had seen stand on its feet as a man, and with a man's voice given to it, the Doctrine in question turns at once into a colossal Memnon's head, a hollow passage for a voice, a voice that mocks the voices of many men, and speaks in their names, and yet is but one voice, and the same;—and no man uttered it, and never in human heart was it conceived."[1]

In opposition to this view Coleridge would have men see in the Bible a literature in various stages of development, and in inspiration a spiritual quickening of the writer's whole nature.

The difficulties of the traditional theory are, he points out, insuperable. In the first place, the Bible makes no claim to be infallible. Once postulate infallibility, and you cannot allow that it has degrees.[2] You are bound to trust every statement as literally accurate, the incredible ages of the patriarchs, and the size of the armies collected by Abijah and Jeroboam; you must put on the same level of inspiration the beatitudes and the curses in the Psalms.[3] Further, he asks, "how can absolute infallibility be blended with fallibility? Where is the infallible criterion? How can infallible truth be infallibly conveyed in defective and fallible expressions?"[4] If anyone raises the objection that criticism destroys the authority of the Bible, Coleridge replies that the Bible may be defended by an appeal to its general spirit, and to the unity of the impression which it conveys.[5] No one, in the parallel case of Shakespeare's plays, would insist that, because a man speaks of Shakespeare, he therefore commits himself to the belief that there was no room for dispute as to the authorship of *Titus*

[1] *Confessions*, pp. 31, 32. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Andronicus. "But, if it be answered—'Aye; but we must not interpret St. Paul as we may and should interpret any other honest and intelligent writer or speaker'—this, I say, this is the very *petitio principii* of which I complain." [1]

Coleridge, like Arnold, was anxious to prepare men's minds for the shock which he knew must come to many, as critical methods spread in England. Herein lies the value of such a book as the *Confessions*. It asserts the spiritual authority of the Bible, the only kind of authority which can carry any weight with a reflective mind; and, with that basis made secure, frankly accepts critical principles and results. Coleridge was one of the first in England to apply to the Bible the categories of life and development. The *Confessions* was the very book to meet the needs of an age which was catching the spirit of historical inquiry, and awaking to larger views of the meaning of Revelation.[2]

NOTE C

Biblical Criticism, 1840–1860

Criticism both of the Old and the New Testament was in full activity during these years, but I have not thought it necessary to devote a special chapter to its development in this period, for the following reasons. First, much of this criticism was concerned with literary details; and it would be out of place to discuss it in a work which aims at describing only the main influences affecting the development of theology. Secondly, the more important of the results reached, or at any rate of the problems investigated, are referred to in other chapters, *e.g.* in the chapter "Strauss and the Tübingen School," and in that headed "Essays and Reviews." It would be mere repetition to mention them again. Thirdly, earlier critics had already focussed attention upon the chief problems which awaited solution, and had laid down some of the main lines of approach to them. I have tried in this and the preceding chapter to indicate what these problems were. Criticism between 1840–1860 was, if we

[1] *Confessions*, p. 26.

[2] The *Confessions* is extraordinarily modern in tone. It still remains one of the best expositions of the principles of higher criticism. There is, however, one curious reservation in Coleridge's acceptance of a wider view of inspiration. He accepts "the recorded words of God—concerning which no Christian can have doubt or scruple" (p. 39). That is, when a writer asserts that the word of the Lord came to him, Coleridge receives his statement without question (cp. pp. 15–16). Cp. Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 145–55.

take a broad view of it, concerned mainly with following out the paths trodden by the original pioneers. A brief note, therefore, is all that is needed here to complete the outlines of the story.

(A) *Old Testament Criticism*

(1) The problem of the sources and composition of the Pentateuch occupies the forefront of investigation. Here reference should be made to Delitzsch's important volume on *Genesis* (1852), in which he clearly demonstrates the composite character of the book; and to Hupfeld's *The Sources of Genesis and the Mode of their Combination* (1853). Hupfeld reaffirmed Ilgen's discovery that there were two Elohist writers, and proves the original independence of the three documents composing the book, thus putting an end once for all to the older Supplement hypothesis.

(2) The application to the religious history of Israel of the idea of development, which had been the distinguishing feature of Vatke's great work, was thoroughly carried out. The order of the stages of the nation's growth was more clearly appreciated. It was seen that the prophets preceded the law, as we have it in its completed form, and that the legal codes of the Old Testament themselves represent a long evolution. In this connection the name of Ewald, Riehm, and Reuss are important. Reuss, indeed, seems to have anticipated Vatke, and in 1834 to have reached the conclusion, then so startling that he hardly dared to put it forward, that the right order of the books of the Old Testament was Prophets, Law, Psalms. By the application of this idea of development to the Old Testament the history of Israel's religion was brought into line with the history of religion everywhere, and Hebrew literature was seen to be governed by the same principles which govern the growth of any literature. At the same time the peculiarities of the Old Testament, its religious uniqueness, and its moral superiority to all other literatures, stood out in relief.

(3) Investigations into the grammar, philology, and text of the Old Testament continued without interruption. Hitzig did good work in the Hebrew text; Hupfeld devoted special attention to philology; and Lagarde in both subjects, and particularly in his study of the Septuagint text, proved himself a worthy successor of Ewald and Gesenius.

(4) Throughout the period, as a result of the advance of criticism, the problem of the meaning of revelation and inspiration came into increasing prominence. The older view of inspiration gradually gave way. The vital question in dispute was, whether inspiration implied the existence of a specific divine communication from with-

out, in whatever way that might be interpreted; or whether the facts could be explained by reference to the native genius of the Hebrew for religion, a genius which of course ultimately owed its being to God.

(B) *New Testament Criticism*

(1) Progress was made in the study of the Synoptic Gospels, as it became more clearly recognised that Mark's and not Matthew's was the earliest of the narratives, and the source whence Luke and Matthew drew much of their material. This had been suggested earlier, *e.g.* by Herder; but it was presented as a carefully established conclusion by Hermann Weisse in his *Evangelische Geschichte* (1838), and was confirmed by Holtzmann in his *Die synoptischen Evangelien* (1863).

(2) With regard to St. John, Baur, as is pointed out elsewhere, was one of the earliest critics to question the view which, owing to the influence of Schleiermacher, obtained almost universally, that the Fourth Gospel was of equal historical value with the other three, if indeed it was not more trustworthy; and to show that the key to its comprehension was to be found in studying the purpose with which it was written. After Baur criticism, as is still the case to-day, was divided between an acceptance of the Johannine authorship and the attribution of the work to someone other than the apostle, but standing in close relation to his thought. There was, however, a general admission that a considerable element of idealisation entered into the structure of the narrative.

(3) Of the whole of the middle period of criticism it may be said, that the chief problem before the critic was to determine the historicity of the sources, and to discover trustworthy material out of which could be constructed a picture of the primitive Church and its Founder. It was a period of detailed investigation, when history was called in to check the earlier flights of speculation.

(4) All the while, as in the case of the Old Testament, the conflict was raging over the meaning and place of the supernatural. Had miracles occurred? Were they possible? There were those who denied *ab initio* that any violation of a law of nature could take place. There were others who stoutly defended miracle. For the most part each critic's attitude was determined by the presuppositions with which he came to the inquiry. But a broad survey of the dispute shows that the upholders of miracle were increasingly put upon the defensive. The area of the miraculous steadily contracted. There was growing recognition of an idealised element in the Gospel story.

Neander, for example, in his answer to Strauss makes significant admissions in a rationalising direction.[1] In England matters came to a head as regards miracle when *Essays and Reviews* was published in 1860.

[1] *Leben Jesu*, 1837. Pfleiderer mentions that Strauss suggested as an appropriate motto for Neander's book, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief" (*Development of Theology*, p. 219).

CHAPTER XI

PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES IN THEOLOGY

It would be untrue to say that the publication in 1835 of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* first made the English public aware that there was such a thing as German thought. The names of Coleridge and of those pioneers of Biblical criticism, Marsh and Thirlwall, at once rise to mind in refutation of the statement. But it is probably true that the issue of this book first brought home to the average, educated Englishman the fact that criticism in Germany was concerning itself with the fundamentals of the faith, as well as with literary and historical details, and that revolutionary tendencies were at work abroad, which, if they ever took root in England, boded ill for traditional theology. Of Strauss's volume something must be said, for it represents the high-water mark of the purely speculative movement in German theology.

But Strauss cannot be understood without some knowledge of the philosophical thought which preceded him. He was the intellectual child of Hegel, and Hegelianism, in its turn, was the last stage of the idealist movement in philosophy which began towards the end of the eighteenth century. It is necessary, therefore, to attempt a slight sketch of some aspects of the development of German idealism. Of the difficulties of the task I am only too painfully aware, and I am not so foolish as to suppose that I have satisfactorily overcome them. All that I have endeavoured to do is to indicate, in as simple language as possible, some of the ways in which religious belief was affected by the vast speculative movement. Our theological outlook to-day is what it is, largely because this philosophical development took place; and, if we would understand our own contemporary mind, we must try to appreciate the heritage of thought to which it has succeeded.

We must begin with the eighteenth century and its rationalism, in reaction against which idealism arose. It was an age

of thinking, but of shallow thinking, and, because the thinking was shallow, it was self-satisfied. There was little sense of the mystery of the universe or of human life, or, if there was any such sense, it provided no stimulus for deeper investigation, for the pursuit of knowledge,

> Like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

The presence of the mysterious and unknown, instead of spurring, checked inquiry. Why seek, asked the rationalist, to fathom the eternal mysteries which surround man's being? The task is hopeless. Human reason cannot attain to clearness of thought in these high regions. Let the mind be content with a humbler achievement, let it deal with the experiences which the senses give, and seek to reduce these to order; or by introspection discover its own constitution, and show that out of the combination of simple elements a complex mental life can arise. Inquiry was thus deliberately simplified, and reason was restricted in its pursuit of truth.

But along with this distrust of reason in ultimate problems went a buoyant confidence in the power of reason to render intelligible the lower levels of human experience. Enlightenment was the watchword of the age. Reason, it was felt, whatever might be its limitations, did possess certain clear luminous ideas, which could be safely used as criteria for the systematising of knowledge. Starting from these ideas, you could by a process of logical deduction build up an articulated scheme of thought, and discover the large principles under which individual facts might be grouped. The dominant influence in philosophy was that of Wolff, the populariser and systematiser of Leibniz. But, as Lessing plainly saw, the thought of Leibniz was far more profound than the Wolffian interpretation of it. It contained anticipations of the fertile ideas of evolution and continuity which were to come to full expression in later philosophy. It was a system which centred round the conception of individuality, and what is individual is unique, and refuses to be merely generalised or classified. But these hints and previsions of deeper meaning Wolff left on one side, and rounded off the thought of his master into a dry, mechanical, intellectualist system, which appeared to

the mind of the age to achieve great things, only because it really attempted lesser ones. Reason, then, setting aside the investigation of more ultimate problems, was supremely confident of its power to explain human life in its surface movements and every-day activities.

It was an age of intellectualism. The spirit of criticism reigned; authority was everywhere questioned. Religious dogmas, venerable ecclesiastical customs and institutions were called before the bar of the logical understanding, and asked to give an account of themselves. They were condemned, if their meaning could not be brought within the compass of reason's clear-cut categories. A narrow individualism coloured all inquiry, and the historical sense was lacking. A study of history is the corrective of individualism, for it shows that the individual is largely what the past has made him, and is inexplicable apart from his surroundings. But the men of the Enlightenment did not know how to study history, because they had no feeling for the past, and were too enamoured of abstract generalisations. It is easy to sum up the past or the present in a series of large formulae, but the more sweeping the generalisation, the more certain it is that the complexity of the conditions has been overlooked. And for an age, pleased with the capacity of reason to illuminate man's path through the present, and impatient of detailed research, the obscurity of the past was a fatal obstacle. The present could be made clear by the light of the critical understanding; the past refused to yield up its secrets so easily. It had better, therefore, be left alone. The historical method was still to be born.

In the field of religion rationalism produced the following results. Authority and dogma were, as we have seen, criticised, but the critics had little true understanding of the nature of religion. Theology is, indeed, the intellectual expression of religious belief, but religion is never a mere matter of the intellect. The whole man is involved in religion. But the Enlightenment had little room in its system for emotion and imagination. Everything had to be intellectualised and voided of its mystery. Hence religion was reduced to morality, and morality, in its turn, was viewed, not as the embodiment of eternal principles of right, but rather as a prudential matter,

a question of expediency. A utilitarian ethic was the prevailing creed. But religion could never be completely equated with morality: a place for God had to be found. But it was found outside rather than within the world. Deism was the current creed. God was regarded as standing apart from the world and man in splendid isolation. Orthodox theology said that He had communicated with man by revelation, and had from time to time interfered with mundane affairs by working miracles. Theologians might believe that if they wished. Rationalism either denied the fact of revelation, or held that revelation taught nothing which natural religion did not already know, or could not discover without external aid. As for miracles, they were natural events, invested by pious fancy with a supernatural character to which they had no legitimate claim.[1]

The current teaching, however, did not pass without some protest. The feelings and emotions had their defenders, who saw that a creed of sheer intellectualism could never satisfy the needs and aspirations of human nature. The individualism of Rousseau was largely emotional. His protest against civilisation was based on a sentiment of affection for an idealised past, in which he pictured man leading a free, natural existence, untrammelled by the conventions of an artificial society.

Pietism, again, which in Germany looked to Spener as its founder, was the revolt of the religious soul against intellectualism. It was intensely individualist in tendency, and therefore shared the rationalistic aversion to authority in matters religious; but it stoutly upheld the claims of faith and feeling, asserting that the life of God entered into man through all the channels of his being. Lessing too, though he may be described as a rationalist in his attitude towards orthodox theology, was helping to undermine rationalism by his teaching upon the value and meaning of history. He saw that, if the present was to be understood, the past must be recovered and appreciated. A rationalism which cared nothing for the past was doomed to impotence. He had assimilated also Leibniz's doctrine of individuality, and insisted that abstract generalisations could never do justice to the concreteness of experience. Lessing possessed the artistic temperament, and the artist ever

[1] Early rationalism, however, was not entirely hostile to supernaturalism. Paulus was perhaps the first who consistently rejected the miraculous.

has his eye upon the individuality of the object. Once more, the rising school of German literature, with the poets at its head, looked to Lessing as its main creator. Poetry, with its insistence upon emotion and intuition, was an effective agency in delivering the age from rationalism. Herder reinforced Lessing's teaching, and both helped to destroy deism, by teaching that God was no remote and external being, but the indwelling life and power of the universe.

The task which lay before succeeding thinkers was that of reconciling these opposing tendencies. Reconciliation could come only by deeper thought. The rationalists rejected metaphysics, but the situation demanded metaphysics, demanded patient thought upon such ultimate problems as the nature of the knowing mind and its capacity to reach truth, the being of God and His relation to the world, the value to be attached to the verdicts of the religious consciousness. It was the metaphysical issue which attracted Kant, the founder of modern idealism.

The least satisfactory part of Kant's work is his treatment of religion. Here he hardly moved beyond the rationalism of his age. Religion for him was morality; its content was purely ethical. God was the imposer of commands which man had to obey; he defines religion as the recognition of duties as divine commands. His doctrine is that of a pure ethical theism. Christ he venerated as the embodiment of a new moral ideal for humanity, the creator of a fresh type of conduct and character which was to be perpetuated in the ethical society of the Church. Feeling and emotion had no place in Kant's ethics. Reverence for the moral law is the only semblance of feeling which Kant will allow, and that is less emotional than intellectual. Duty for duty's sake, unhesitating loyalty to the stern imperative of right, with no regard for consequences, and no place left for desire—that is his ethical creed; majestic in its frozen dignity, but impossible for men of flesh and blood whose moral obedience must be quickened into affection, if it is to maintain itself.

The greatest of all the problems awaiting solution was the relation of man to God, of the finite to the infinite. How was that relation to be conceived? And that question involved another. How could man know God? Earlier speculation in

the eighteenth century had been concerned with this very problem, and the discussion upon it had taken two forms. There was, first, the more philosophical inquiry, started by Descartes, as to the validity of the idea of God in the human mind. Was it one of those clear ideas loved by the rationalist, as providing him with the principles from which he might build up his system? And if a clear idea, did it carry with it an objective reference? Did the idea of God prove the existence of God? Secondly, there was the dispute as to the respective claims of natural religion and revelation. How much of God could man discover by the natural light of reason? Had God supplemented or superseded this natural knowledge by a special communication of truth from without? This was the form under which the problem was discussed in the Deistic controversy. Now Kant, while overthrowing Descartes' ontological argument, advanced the inquiry, by insisting that, before you could determine how man could know God, or how much of Him he could know, you must first examine the nature of knowledge generally. How was knowledge possible? What were the conditions of there being any knowledge at all? What were the parts in the formation of knowledge played severally by the senses and by reason? Kant himself tells us that it was the scepticism of Hume which roused him to the undertaking of his task. He had, in other words, two lines of thinking before him. There was rationalism, with its easy confidence in the power of the intellect; and there was empiricism, of which Locke was the founder, which at the hands of Hume had developed into sheer scepticism. Kant set out to see if, by a deeper analysis, he could not reconcile these opposing systems.

Now Hume had said that knowledge was not possible; that is, that man could never reach universal and necessary truth, but could only live in the fleeting succession of sense perceptions, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, but unable to arrive at any assurance as to the reality and permanence of his own being, or of the outer world of objects. The conclusion seems absurd enough, unless we remember what it was that Hume was doing. He was reducing to its strict logical issues the theory of knowledge which Locke had enunciated nearly a century before in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

This is not the place to deal in detail with Locke's philosophy, which dominated English thought for a hundred and fifty years, and also powerfully influenced the mind of Germany; the barest sketch of his theory of knowledge will suffice. Locke started with the assumption that all knowledge was built up out of unitary sensations. The mind at the outset of life was empty, was like "white paper, void of all characters." Objects outside caused sensations in us, and experience was the registration of these sensations upon the tablets of the mind, the mind being thus the passive recipient of impressions from without. But the mind had also the power of combining the impressions, of contrasting and comparing them; and Locke traces out the methods by which out of elementary sensations we build up a world of knowledge.

Hume pointed out that, if you begin with an empty, passive mind, you can never pass beyond the elements of sensation. One impression comes, another succeeds it, but that is all. Even if you admit that there is a combining power in the mind by which elementary sensations are built up into complexes, and reflected in ideas, still by this procedure you can never reach necessary truth, such truth, for example, as science claims to possess, truth holding good for all men at all times. No amount of repetition of similar impressions can generate necessity. Nor can you reach any knowledge of the reality of the outside world, or of the permanence and identity of your own self, for all you know is the transient impression. Blank scepticism is therefore the logical result of this creed. We live, said Hume, in a world of illusion, thinking that we have knowledge, when we have none.

Kant saw that such a conclusion was a *reductio ad absurdum*. Knowledge was possible. It existed in the physical sciences, which proved that they possessed it by predicting with success the future course of nature. The theory which made Hume's scepticism possible must therefore be fundamentally wrong. Kant, accordingly, set himself to investigate anew the whole problem of the possibility of knowledge. He did not ask, as did Locke, how knowledge grew up in the individual mind, and what were the psychological laws governing the formation of experience, but he asked this question,—Given a piece of knowledge, a scientific

truth, for example, which holds good for the future, what are the conditions necessarily involved in the existence of that piece of knowledge? What assumptions must we make in order to account for the knowledge being there? The answer, broadly stated, which Kant gave to the problem, was that knowledge was possible, because the mind was not, as Locke assumed, an empty, passive recipient of impressions from without, but an active agency, supplying from its own resources certain principles which made it possible for an ordered experience to arise. In other words, Kant showed that the activity of mind, which Locke, in contradiction of his original assumption, was forced in part to allow, was of wider and deeper range than Locke saw. Any experience—the simplest perception, for example—involved the activity of a mind which recognised it as a perception, and as the perception of a self, and related it to other perceptions already received. Without this assumption of mental activity you could not take a single step in explaining the growth of experience and knowledge. The starting-point of the whole idealist movement is the emphasis laid upon the mind's contribution to experience.

But then the question arose, How far could the mind reach in its grasp of truth? Could it know God? Here Kant gave an answer which by its unsatisfactory character stimulated subsequent thought to pass beyond it. He said that man could not *know* God. Knowledge in the strict sense is of phenomena only. We can show that nature is orderly, bound together everywhere by the chain of cause and effect, we can group and arrange our sense-experiences, but we cannot pass beyond nature to its cause, or have any knowledge of God and the supersensuous world. The final problems of metaphysics were thus insoluble. Ultimate reality lay beyond the grasp of human intelligence. It appeared as if theology was a futile endeavour to know the unknowable, and as if scepticism was the only possible creed. But what Kant took away with one hand he tried to restore with the other. He fell back upon the implications of the moral consciousness. Morality demanded God and immortality, demanded a free self, unfettered by the limitations of sense and desire. Though man could not know God, as an ethical being he could divine Him. He could rise to the vision of a completer knowledge than was

possible for his understanding, and had ideals which, though it was true he could never actualise them, were there to regulate and quicken thought and action.

Kant, then, appeared to sunder man into two, and to proclaim a divorce between the speculative and practical sides of his being, between knowledge and faith. The position was clearly unsatisfactory, for, however you may distinguish aspects of him, man is after all a unity, and thought cannot permanently rest content with the existence of any such opposition as Kant propounds. Kant's difficulty is seen if we revert to his definition of religion as the recognition of duties as divine commands. Let us ask how the command comes to us. Is it by revelation from without? But if so, then Kant contradicts his principle that man must obey duty for duty's sake. Morality requires a purely spontaneous obedience; to obey because God orders it is to lose sight of the true ethical motive. Is the revelation from within? Does the moral consciousness in recognising the call of duty recognise it as the working of God within the self? If so, then why limit God's working to the ethical sphere? Why may not God be regarded as at work in the speculative reason? If He works at all in man, must He not work in the whole of man?

This dualism of Kant later idealism set out to overcome. It broke down the barrier between man and God which Kant had left, and boldly proclaimed that knowledge of ultimate reality was possible, because the divine reason was operative in human reason. Man and God were co-workers in a common task. God was no longer treated as a being apart from nature and man, but as the one universal life or reason dwelling in both.

Now it is important to understand the nature of this step taken by later idealism, and its claim that, in taking it, it was only making explicit what was already implicit in the Kantian system. Kant, as we have seen, was engaged in a logical, not a psychological inquiry. He was not, that is, tracing the actual growth of knowledge in the mind of the individual, but was asking what logical assumptions we had to make if we wished to account for the existence of any piece of knowledge. He came to the conclusion that the most fundamental of all the assumptions which had to be made was the existence of a self

for which the knowledge existed. A sensation had only a momentary existence; it vanished, and another sensation took its place. But experience and knowledge implied the ordering and grouping of sensations, and such ordering was possible only if there were some permanent centre to which the sensations could be referred. The rationality of man implied that he did not live in a chaotic world of sense-impressions, but in a world of ordinary relations. That the world was orderly was proved not only by our common experience, but by science, whose work consisted in the revelation of nature's uniformities. But order, said Kant, was impossible without the existence of some permanent centre, some permanent subject of knowledge which we name the Ego or Self. This permanent subject of knowledge is the same in all of us. In other words, we are built upon the same mental plan. Any experience, any piece of knowledge, whether yours or mine, whether existing now or ten thousand years hence, involves, as its necessary implication, as that without which it could not be, this permanent centre of unity. But this self or centre is treated by Kant in an abstract or impersonal fashion. He is not thinking of the living self of any particular person or of all persons. He is thinking of selfhood in the abstract, and of what logical assumptions we must make if we are to explain the existence of knowledge. So that we may say that the self which is implied in all experience is for Kant's purposes treated as an abstract unity, as a point of view which our minds must take, if they are to explain the facts. His inquiry is throughout logical. But later idealism transformed the whole situation by converting Kant's logical conclusion into a metaphysical one. The permanent subject of knowledge was treated as if it were the divine self. The consciousness in general which Kant was investigating was converted into a universal consciousness, and the identity of formal structure which Kant revealed in all experience was interpreted as the presence in all of us of the single mind of God. The logical standpoint of Kant was abandoned; its place was taken by a metaphysical theory, which explained the fact that A and B had similar experiences and shared in a common world of knowledge by the assertion that their minds were the vehicle or expression of the one absolute mind of God. Of the legitimacy of this procedure, or of the

validity of the arguments by which the position of the later idealists is defended, this is not the place to speak.[1] All that I want to point out here is the importance of the change and its effect upon theology. The whole problem of the relation of finite to infinite assumed a new complexion, and the investigation of it brought philosophy and theology into close connection. In particular, attention was focussed upon the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, as being the supreme example of that union of human and divine which idealism was concerned to prove. We can see how the idealists who were preaching the creed of God in man, of the universal mind in finite minds, would be interested in the doctrine of the God-man. Hence it was that they were eager to bring theology into line with their philosophy, and that speculative Christologies flourished in abundance.

I pass on to trace in the briefest possible way the development, as it affected theology, of post-Kantian idealism.

Fichte's maturer thought shows a marked advance upon his earlier. In his earlier phase he follows Kant more closely, and emphasizes the existence of an eternal order of morality, faith in which constitutes religion. He does not, at this point of his thought, refer to God. He is concerned with the moral struggles of the individual, and pictures existence as being made up of the strivings of finite egos, each of which is spurred on to realise a distant moral ideal. But the moral ideal has no objective existence. It is not realised in God; and it will never be reached. It floats above humanity as an unsubstantial vision, beckoning men on, and yet, as Fichte came to see later, mocking them by its unattainable character. In his later phase Fichte seeks to find an objective ground and basis of the universe. He does so, because he had realised that morality, as Kant had taught, becomes meaningless unless there is some prospect of victory and attainment; and because he felt the need of finding some principle of unity for his world, which myriads of struggling, finite selves could not provide. And here he takes the step, described above, which converted Kant's logical into a metaphysical theory. He proclaims the existence

[1] An excellent account of the transformation of Kantian into Absolute Idealism, and a searching criticism of the latter, is to be found in Seth's (Pringle-Pattison) *Hegelianism and Personality*.

of an absolute life or thought of which the consciousness of finite individuals is a mode. His language about this absolute being is vague. He calls it the universal life, or the universal thought, but he never actually gives it the name of God,[1] and he shows a tendency to avoid describing it as an Ego. But his uncertainties in this matter need not concern us here. What does concern us is that Fichte made possible the growth of an absolute idealism, the final consummation of which was the doctrine that all existence, nature, history, the human mind, was a mode of, or moment in, the one universal life of the Absolute.

What, now, had Fichte to say about Christianity with its central doctrine of the Incarnation? We should antecedently expect that so speculative a thinker would be less interested in the historical Christ than in the idea which the Incarnation embodies. And this we find to be the case. The Incarnation is significant for him, because it is the supreme illustration of the eternal truth of the unity of the divine and the human. He fixes upon the doctrine of the Logos, and interprets the eternal existence of the Word as implying the eternal incarnation of God in humanity. He admits that this union of God and man was achieved in a unique sense by Christ, and that only through Him can man attain to it in its completeness. But behind the concrete, historical fact lies the truth which alone gives it meaning, that humanity is eternally the home of the divine. We shall see later how Hegel was baffled by the problem of the historical Christ, and how he failed to fit Him into his speculative system. Meanwhile we note in Fichte the beginning of two tendencies which became so marked in later theology; first, to substitute humanity for Christ, and thus make incarnation an eternal fact or process; secondly, to set aside the historical Person of Jesus in favour of a speculative theory of the relation of man to God.

In Schelling these two tendencies come to their full development. He first intellectualised Christianity, and offered a speculative construction of it which was a reflection of his

[1] In fact, he distinguishes it from God, whom he seems to regard as the object of the universal thought. The net result is that this universal thought remains an abstraction. It is thought without a mind to think it. It is purely impersonal, and so cannot be rationally regarded as in any sense a creative cause. Can we, indeed, predicate existence of it?

metaphysical creed. Fichte had begun with man, with the moral striving of the finite ego, and had passed from thence to an objective ground of reality which he named the Absolute. Schelling may be said to have reversed Fichte's procedure, and to have begun with the Absolute, whose existence he claimed that we grasped by intellectual intuition. Philosophy, he considered, had made a mistake in starting with the consciousness of the individual; it should rather direct its eye outward and begin with nature and history. For all existence formed one whole. The Absolute was all-inclusive. From its connection with the Absolute everything finite derived its significance; nay, each finite thing was the Absolute focussed there at that particular point. Each pulse of time, each happening in nature or history, was a moment in the life of the eternal being. Two main spheres of the Absolute's self-expression might be distinguished—nature and spirit. In the former the expression was of a lower kind; the philosophy of nature was a philosophy of the unconscious. But in history the expression was higher; here the Absolute revealed itself as spirit, and the law of spirit was free movement toward completer life. Schelling, then, did two things. He broke down the barrier between finite and infinite by making the former a mere mode of the latter. He emphasized the thought of the universe as one organic and developing whole. The life of the Absolute was a growing life which reached its fullest expression in the consciousness of men.

When he came to treat of Christianity, Schelling construed it in terms of his speculative system. Its essential feature, he tells us, is that, unlike some other religions which deified nature, it humanised God. The Incarnation is its central doctrine, and this he interprets as signifying the eternal identity of the human and the divine. Collective man, humanity in its corporate being, was the true incarnation. Incarnation was a perpetual process; God becomes man in every individual born into the world. Thus a spiritual kingdom was slowly being developed in which the life of the Absolute found its fulfilment. The Incarnation of the historical Jesus was but the concrete embodiment of a principle which was best understood if you forgot the historical figure, and fixed your thought upon ideal humanity, upon the collective manhood of the race. It followed from this interpretation that the historical truth of

the records relating to Christ was a relatively unimportant matter. What was of importance was the truth of the idea that man and God are one. That truth, according to Schelling, the Christian Church had wrapped round with a covering of historical narrative, and attached as much importance to the husk as to the kernel. Schelling would liberate the idea from this local setting, and would have men realise that truth which is of eternal import is independent of any particular historical mode of presentation. Schelling's metaphysics, like those of all the absolutist idealists, are, it is needless to say, open to the gravest objections, and have been much criticised by later philosophy.[1] But his interpretation of the Incarnation has had an abiding influence. We shall trace that influence in Strauss, in Moehler, and, through the latter, in the teaching which would see in the Church and the sacraments an extension of the Incarnation.[2]

Hegel's own saying, that a great man condemns the world to the task of explaining him, has nowhere received a richer illustration than in the case of Hegel himself. On the one hand, you have Hegelianism vindicated as an absolute idealism, as a system which proves that the universe is throughout rational, and that thought is of the essence of being. On the other hand is the claim of the Hegelian left wing that the logical issue of the system is materialism. Again, viewed as an absolute idealism, Hegelianism is variously interpreted. There are those who maintain that Hegel's Absolute is a personal self-consciousness, not to be identified with the world-process though entering into it—that Hegel, in other words, believed in a Personal God as the ultimate ground of existence, who is somehow at once both process and perfection. There are others who argue that the Absolute is process only, that Hegel's God grows, and reaches self-consciousness only in the consciousness of finite selves. Yet a third interpretation is that of Dr.

[1] The central difficulty in Schelling is, I suppose, his attempt to derive the finite from the infinite, to show how out of the original abstraction and emptiness of the Absolute the varied world of nature and men could arise. Hegel refused to treat the Absolute as substance. For him it was eternally Subject; that is, not a bare identity, but a unity of differences. His Absolute, therefore, had movement and variety within it eternally; but in his case too it is a question whether he does not attempt the surely vain task of deriving a real world out of abstract and impersonal thought.

[2] Cp. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 210, note.

McTaggart, who denies that Hegel believed in any God at all, and construes reality in terms of the existence of an eternal society of finite spirits. I mention these varieties of views, not in order to discuss them, but because they point unmistakably to the existence in Hegel's writings of fundamental uncertainties of thought and language. If Hegel's meaning had been clear, would there have been this diversity of opinion? Now we are not concerned with the problem of the self-consistency of the Hegelian metaphysics. All that we have to try to do is to make clear Hegel's main line of thought, first, upon the Incarnation, and then upon the relation in which he conceived religion stood to philosophy. If we can do that, we shall be in a better position to understand Strauss, whose theological outlook was governed by Hegel, and also to measure more adequately the significance of the work done by Schleiermacher.

Now, whether Hegel believed in a Personal God or not, he systematically applied the thought of process to the Absolute. He regards the movement of the universe as the life of God. God is immanent in the processes of nature and history. The Absolute for Hegel is Spirit, and he shows how process is the very meaning of spirit, how in the life of spirit there is everywhere revealed a movement which is to be described as a going out from itself into otherness, only that it may return enriched into itself again. Thus the Absolute, having objectified or externalised itself in the world of the finite, is in process of returning to itself in the consciousness of man. In the Christian doctrine of the Trinity Hegel found an illustration of this truth. God the Father is God as He is in Himself eternally. God the Son is God objectified in nature and history, spirit going out of itself into the form of otherness. God the Spirit is the finite returning to the infinite, God taking back, as it were, His otherness into His own being again.[1] The universe, therefore, is the necessary vehicle and expression of the life of God. Neither God nor the universe could exist without each other. Incarnation, then, is an essential element in the life of God. Since the whole process of the finite is the channel through which the life of the Absolute flows, it may be said that incar-

[1] Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity, though it was welcomed at first by theologians, is not the Christian doctrine. For the differences between the two, cp. McTaggart's *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, chap. viii.

nation is the very *raison d'être* of God's existence. But Christianity does not speak of incarnation in general, but of a unique act of incarnation in the Person of Christ. How does Hegel deal with the problem of the historical Jesus? He argues that man is conscious of division and alienation from God, and craves for reconciliation. Though he is essentially one with God, he requires sensible proof of the fact. Hence arises the necessity for an atonement manifested in sensuous form. The God-man Jesus dies for men in order to demonstrate to them their oneness with God. Hegel, then, unlike Schelling, who neglected the historical Christ, appears at first sight to grapple with the problem of the Incarnation. But a closer examination makes it plain that he too avoids the real issue. A defence of the Incarnation ought to concern itself with two problems. First, it should show (so far as that is possible for human reason) the necessity for a genuine historical incarnation; secondly, it should investigate the consciousness of Christ. The uniqueness of that consciousness, the consciousness of One who knew Himself to be both God and man, is the central fact which requires explanation. Now Hegel does not come to close quarters with either of these problems; but gives us instead an account of the growth in the popular mind of the belief that Christ was God and man.[1] He says that the unphilosophical multitude cannot be expected to have any speculative knowledge of the truth of the unity of the divine and the human nature, but must become certain of it in other ways:

"What we are concerned to show is rather that the idea becomes for them certain, *i.e.* this idea, namely, the unity of Divine and human nature, attains the stage of certainty, that, so far as they are concerned, it receives the form of immediate sense-perception, of outward existence—in short, that this Idea appears as seen and experienced in the world. This unity must accordingly show itself to consciousness in a purely temporal, absolutely ordinary manifestation of reality, in one particular man, in a definite individual, who is at the same time known to be the Divine Idea, not merely a Being of higher kind in general, but rather the highest, the Absolute Idea, the Son of God."[2]

[1] Cp. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 221.

[2] *Philosophy of Religion* (translated by Spiers and Sanderson), iii. 72.

Now this is nothing but an avoiding of the issue. Hegel passes by the real problem of the appearance in time of a unique Person, and offers us instead an explanation of the Incarnation as necessary, if the unlearned were to grasp the philosophical truth of the unity of man and God. The obvious inference from his argument is that the philosopher who has speculative insight can do without this central doctrine of Christianity. But, as Schleiermacher saw, if the faith of the Christian Church is to be adequately explained, you must set behind it a creative personality. The faith is derived from the Person of Christ, not the doctrine of the Person from the faith. Hegel, then, with all his interest in history, fails when he comes face to face with the historical fact of Jesus; and, instead of trying to explain Him, gives us, first, an account of incarnation in general as the mode of the Absolute's self-expression; and, secondly, tries to show how the Christian dogma of the Incarnation grew up in the mind of the Church. To Christ Himself Hegel attaches great importance, as being the first to realise fully and to teach clearly the fundamental truth of the unity of God and man. But His significance lies in what He taught, rather than in what He was in Himself.

We can see plainly one source of Hegel's difficulty in this matter. If the Absolute is process, if all finite being is the progressive manifestation of God, how can there be at any one point in the process a manifestation complete in character, and possessed of the finality and uniqueness which Christianity attributes to the Incarnation? To admit such a manifestation is to admit the emergence in the course of the evolution of a factor distinct in kind, which cannot be brought within the process or explained by its categories. If the Absolute is developing, and comes to self-consciousness in man, then man takes the place of God. Man's achievement is the measure of the divine. But in man's achievement there is no finality; he is ever advancing. How, then, can there be any place in this continuous advance for the advent of a being such as the Christian faith conceives Christ to be? The hypothesis of a progressive incarnation of God in humanity fails to do justice to the peculiar character which, as Christianity claims, belongs to the Incarnation of Christ.

Schelling had begun the process of intellectualising Chris-

tianity; Hegel completed it. To understand how he did so, we must try to appreciate the relation in which he considered religion stood to philosophy. The essence or kernel of religion, he held, was thought, but religion as it existed among men was thought in sensuous or picture guise.[1] Religion made use of symbols and institutions; it dealt with truth embodied in figurative forms, and grasped spiritual realities by means of sensuous *media*. But philosophy had to penetrate beneath this wrapping of the material and symbolic, and discover the thought which underlay it. It had to grasp God as an object of pure thought, and to construe Him in terms of thought alone. To reach truth in its pure intellectuality was the philosopher's aim. He must translate his thinking into the language of what Hegel calls the "notion" which is the highest form of thought; in which thought grasps the inner being of its object, views it in its totality, and tries to understand it as it exists for itself. Now both religion and philosophy aimed at reaching truth; the object of both was God. The difference between them was, that, while philosophy construed God in terms of pure thought alone, religion construed Him by means of sensuous or figurative conceptions. But the various religions were, in this matter, not all on the same plane. Some embodied the truth which all aimed at reaching more adequately than others. Christianity was supreme among the religions, because, as Hegel considered, its essential content was in agreement with what philosophy taught about the Absolute. Hegel therefore set out to translate Christian truth into its pure philosophical form. In doing so he reduced it to an intellectual scheme, and prepared the way for Strauss, who severed it from its historical connections. It would be untrue to say that for Hegel himself the historical facts of Christianity were of no importance. His feeling for history was too strong to allow of his taking up any such position. If Christianity was ideal and eternal truth, it was truth which was embodied in fact. But the unquestionable tendency of his system was in the direction of vindicating the absolute character of the

[1] Hegel does not neglect the element of feeling in religion; but recognises it as an important factor in the religious consciousness, as that, in fact, which constitutes the individuality of the worshipper. But he cannot rest in feeling, for it is too indefinite to provide the material for a constructive theology. Thought gives clear expression to what feeling dimly grasps.

religion at the expense of its historicity, and of treating its temporal manifestations merely as expressions of timeless truths. And, as has been already pointed out, this tendency is most clearly revealed in his handling of the problem of the historical Jesus. The connection of Christian dogmas with the Person of Jesus Christ is absolutely vital. If we discuss them apart from Him, we are not discussing Christianity.

No great system such as Hegelianism could fail to have an important influence upon theology. It would be a long task, and one which for our present purpose is unnecessary, to examine the theological teaching of the successive writers who looked to Hegel as their inspirer.[1] I would therefore only mention three directions in which the seed sown by him has borne fruit in later times. In the first place Hegel, more than any one else, helped theology to become historical. His philosophy of religion is based on history. His historical treatment of the great religions promoted the comparative study of religion, and his sense of history as the process through which the thought of God was being unfolded gave to the study of history a dignity and seriousness which it had before lacked. The rapid eclipse which overtook Hegelianism was partly due to the growing consciousness that his metaphysical speculation had been too abstract and daring; but it was also due to the recognition that for the solution of historical problems, and particularly those connected with Christianity, there was needed much patient investigation of detail. Brilliant though many of Hegel's generalisations upon the development of religion are, the course of inquiry has of necessity considerably modified them. With fresh instruments of research fresh facts have come to light, of which Hegel was not, and could not have been, aware. But he gave the historical impulse which, passing through Baur and the Tübingen school, affected the whole of theological inquiry in the nineteenth century, and is still far from being spent. To Hegel, again, we owe the application to theology of the idea of development. Holding, as he did, that the essence of religion was thought, he emphasized the

[1] I shall hope in the second volume of this work to say something on this point. It will be more appropriate to examine Hegelian influence on Christian dogma, when we are considering the dogmatic reconstruction of English theology in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

importance of dogma. The rationalists had done the same, but their conception of dogma was static. Theology in their view consisted of a group of dogmas, knit together by the loosest of ties, and displaying no organic inter-relationship. They were uninterested in the historical evolution of doctrine, and failed to relate dogma to experience. But development was the sovereign category of the Hegelian system. To understand a dogma you must, said Hegel, approach it through its history, and grasp the movement of thought of which it is the outcome. Similarly the affiliation of one dogma to another must be studied, for each wins its meaning from its place in the theological system as a whole. As a result of this teaching the study of the development of doctrine quickly came to the front. And Hegel's influence was, as we shall see, reinforced by that of Schleiermacher, who brought dogma into connection with experience, and insisted that, just because experience was always growing, there must be a continuous development of dogma. Lastly, Hegel forced into prominence the Christological problem; and this for two reasons. First, his own failure to do justice to the Person of Christ led theologians, and notably some of his more direct followers, such as Biedermann, to attempt a more adequate treatment. Secondly, his claim that Christianity was the absolute religion focussed attention upon those features in it which were at once distinctive and universal. As men investigated its uniqueness, they found it to consist in the presence of a historical Person who made universal claims. To provide a satisfactory interpretation of that Person became the paramount necessity for theology. To recover the historical Jesus, to define the theological Christ, and to determine the relation between the two, was the triple task assigned to the remainder of the century.

CHAPTER XII

STRAUSS AND THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL

STRAUSS set himself to write the *Leben Jesu* (1835–6) with three main objects in view. He wished, first, to reconcile Christian theology with the Hegelian philosophy, of which he was an ardent adherent. Next, he wished to destroy absolutely all belief in the supernatural and miraculous—"in the person and acts of Jesus no supernaturalism shall be allowed to remain.[1] Thirdly, he sought to write a life of Jesus which should conform to the canons of a scientific, historical criticism. No such scientific history, he maintained, existed. All earlier or current histories of Jesus suffered from one or other, or both, of the following defects. They were written in an apologetic interest, with the object of defending the supernatural character of Christ, and they assumed at the start that the Gospel narratives were historical, in the sense of being records of events which actually occurred. This assumption was common both to the orthodox party and to the rationalists. The orthodox maintained that in the Gospels we had genuine history, partly natural, partly supernatural, and accepted both elements as true. The rationalists, while rejecting the supernatural element, argued that the supernatural was the natural magnified and misconceived. To disentangle from its supernatural wrappings the core of historical fact was the purpose of their criticism. Paulus was the chief exponent of the rationalistic method, which in his hands reached conclusions so extravagant that they were condemned by their very absurdity. The assumption of the historicity of the records depended in turn upon another assumption, namely, that the Gospels, and particularly those of Matthew and John, were the work of eye-witnesses who had a personal knowledge of the events

[1] *A New Life of Jesus for the German People* (authorised trans.), 1865, Preface, p. xii.

which they described, and whose statements must therefore be accepted as true. With regard to St. John's Gospel, Bretschneider had in 1820 decided against its historicity on the ground that, if the synoptic narratives were historical, a narrative so utterly different in character could not also be historical, but his opinion carried little weight with the apologists who, with Schleiermacher at their head, made St. John's account of Jesus the foundation of all their theology. Strauss points out that this belief in the authenticity of the fourth Gospel was not based on critical grounds, but was due to the fact that the Johannine Christology had many points of affinity with the romantic spirit of the age, and the mystical pantheism of much of the current philosophy.[1]

The result of this conservatism of the theologians was threefold. In the first place, apologists regarded the problem of the Gospel narratives as mainly a matter of harmonistics. If all were the narratives of eye-witnesses, then discrepancies must somehow be reconciled. The utmost ingenuity was shown in effecting this object. But, secondly, as Strauss complains, where the harmonising method reigned supreme, it was impossible to find out what Jesus actually did or said. Interest centred in the problem of what the Evangelists made Him do or say. A deeper and more penetrating inquiry was needed, in order to discover the really historical portions of the Gospels. "What we especially want to know," says Strauss, in explaining why he wrote his *Life of Jesus*, "is this:—is the Gospel history true and reliable as a whole, and in its details, or is it not?"[2] The third result of theological conservatism was that no satisfactory reconciliation could be effected between theology on the one hand, and philosophy and scientific history on the other. So long as theologians defended the presence of a supernatural element in the Person and work of Jesus, so long, Strauss felt, were they invoking the aid of a principle which the philosopher and historian could only regard as irrational. To synthesize theology and philosophy had been, as we have seen, one of the great aims of the speculative idealists, and this synthesis had been most completely carried out by Hegel, but at the cost of abandoning the historical basis of Christianity. Strauss

[1] *A New Life of Jesus* (authorised trans.), p. 120.
[2] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xi.

claimed to be searching for the historical Jesus, but instead of a living teacher he offers us a figure which is the creation of his own imagination. The price which he pays for his Hegelianising of Christianity is the virtual disappearance of the Founder of the religion in the mists of myth and legend.

We may sum up the broad results of Strauss's criticism by saying that it taught the critics the inadequacy of their equipment for the task which lay before them.[1] If the conclusions of Paulus were extravagant, no less so were those of Strauss. It was not enough to criticise the Gospel history. Behind the history lay the documents and records which enshrined it. Until these had been carefully examined, their dates and interrelationship determined, criticism must remain largely subjective. Strauss provided the stimulus which led to the growth of a sound literary criticism of the New Testament.

As we have seen, the initial assumption which governs the whole of Strauss's inquiry is that miracle is impossible. A history of Jesus, therefore, can contain no supernatural element. In the first chapter of the *Life* Strauss sketches the various attempts which had been made before his time to write the story of Christ's career. He finds them all unsatisfactory, because, in greater or less degree, they had all sought to retain the supernatural. Even if they rejected the recorded miracles of Jesus, and refused to treat the Resurrection and Ascension as historical occurrences, they still postulated a supernatural element in the Person of Christ, investing His consciousness with a unique character which required for its explanation a special creative act of God.[2] But for Strauss the supernatural was impossible, because religion was a historical development. The sudden introduction of a perfect man into the story of a slowly climbing humanity would, he considered, render evolution meaningless. Perfection, if it is to be reached at all, must come at the end of the development, not at some point halfway down the stream. And philosophy knew nothing of these

[1] Cp. Baur's words: "Strauss was hated, because the spirit of the time was unable to look upon its own portrait, which he held up before it in faithful, clearly drawn lines. The spirit of this age resists with all its power the proof of its ignorance on a matter about which it has long thought itself certain." (Quoted from Pfleiderer's Introd. to 5th edit. of George Eliot's trans. of the *Life of Jesus*.)

[2] Cp. *The Life of Jesus* (5th edit., trans. by George Eliot), § 148, "The Eclectic Christology of Schleiermacher."

irruptions from without. For it the universe was a self-contained whole, developing by its own immanent powers. How, again, could the eternal and infinite be manifested in the finite? How could the ideal manhood, which needed the whole story of humanity for its gradual actualisation, be embodied in a single historical person? Not one man, but mankind, was needed for the realisation of the ideal. Strauss here follows faithfully the teaching of his master in philosophy.[1]

We may remark in passing, that it is a pure assumption that history can find no place for such a personality as orthodox Christology defines Christ to be. Transcendence is a category for which we have to allow, equally with immanence. If our metaphysics lead us to a belief in the existence of a personal will behind phenomena, we have good ground for arguing that that will may interpose for a special purpose in the ordinary working of nature. The historian may rightly, with a view to treating history in scientific fashion, make the methodological assumption that miracles do not happen, but he must beware lest his assumption blind him to the facts. We may well ask what account can be given of personality on the hypothesis of a rigid uniformity. Personality implies freedom, and history is the sphere of the collision and co-operation of personal wills. In a universe, where personality is the highest thing we know, the emergence at a definite point of time of a supreme personality is something which we may believe without writing ourselves down as fools.

Now while Hegel may be said to have avoided in large measure the problem of the historical Christ, Strauss makes a determined attempt to deal with it. He offers an explanation of how the conception of Christ as a supernatural being arose. This is his famous mythical theory, which was not indeed new, as Strauss readily admits,[2] but which he was the first to apply to the life of Christ systematically, and with no reservations in his mind. A myth he regarded, following Müller, not as the

[1] *Life of Jesus*, sect. 148. Cp. the whole of the concluding dissertation—"The Dogmatic Import of the Life of Jesus."

[2] Cp. *Life of Jesus*, Introd., sects. 8–10. Semler and Schelling had made use of the principle of myth in interpreting the Bible. In 1820 Bauer published *A Hebrew Mythology of the Old and New Testaments*. Müller had already taken the view that myth was the work of a whole people. Heyne's *dictum* was "*A mythis omnis priscorum hominum cum historia tum philosophia procedit.*"

creation of an individual mind, but as the work of the common mind of the people among whom it arose. It was no case of conscious intent to deceive. There was a natural tendency for pious imagination to invest a hero, or an object of veneration, with supernatural qualities. Religious enthusiasm, running keen in the blood, expressed itself unconsciously in this weaving of myth and legend. Where many souls were kindled, an irresistible common impulse urged them to their creative task. But myths cannot be manufactured out of nothing. How was it, then, that the human Jesus was transformed in the mind of the early Church into the divine and supernatural Christ? Strauss answers the question by pointing to the existence among the Jews of the Messianic idea and hope. There, in the expectation of the Messiah, was the material ready to hand which pious fancy could use when it set out to cast round Jesus the halo of the supernatural. Out of these two elements, the actual impression made by Jesus upon His contemporaries and the rich store of Messianic beliefs, the Christ of orthodox theology was constructed by the faithful disciples who wished to honour their Master. In many instances nothing more was necessary than to transfer to Jesus and His acts qualities which the current literature attributed to the Messiah. In others these Messianic qualities were themselves heightened and adorned. For the most part the process went on unconsciously in the general mind, though at times the evangelists deliberately added some touch which would still further glorify the subject of their history. This hypothesis of the myth-making tendency Strauss applies to the whole Gospel story, and displays great ingenuity in discovering Messianic analogies or parallels for every supernatural incident or claim in the life of Jesus.

We may take as a specimen of his treatment the miracle at Cana of Galilee.[1] The incident is recorded by St. John alone, and therefore in Strauss's opinion belongs to a circle of tradition to which the synoptic writers had no access. It is easier, he says, to believe this than to believe that they knew of a miracle so important, and the first which Jesus performed, and did not record it; or to believe that they did record it, but that it has somehow dropped out of their narratives. How, then, did it find its way into the Johannine tradition? Strauss refers us to

[1] *Life of Jesus*, sect. 103.

the Old Testament, where we read that Moses changed water into blood,[1] and sweetened bitter water,[2] and Elisha purified water that was foul.[3] In addition, he quotes the Rabbinical belief in the *Midrash Koheleth*, that the bestowal of water was one of the beneficent actions attributed to the Messiah. Now the change of water into blood was a vindictive change for the worse, and as such not an action to be expected of a mild and gentle Messiah; while the sweetening of bitter water involved no change of species. What could be more natural than to credit the Messiah with an action which should combine the two conditions of a change of substance and a change for the better? To turn water into wine was a beneficent act, and one also which involved a miraculous element, the transmutation of species. In this way Messiah was proved to be superior to any who had gone before him. Other miracles are to be explained in a similar fashion. Everywhere the religious imagination of the people was at work, clothing Jesus with Messianic glory, and transferring to Him in heightened degree all the elements of wonder and mystery with which tradition had invested the heroes of the Old Testament.

The effect of such a critical method, ruthlessly and consistently applied to the whole Gospel story, was of the most far-reaching character. Very little was left of the original historical Christ. Everything supernatural, and most of what men had deemed historical, had vanished. Faith was utterly shattered. It was no longer possible for the plain man to say, "Lord, I believe"; the only petition which he could make was, "Help thou mine unbelief."

Yet it was not Strauss's intention at this time to destroy faith entirely. Orthodoxy, with its traditional conservatism and its belief in the supernatural, must indeed be shattered, but from its ruins was to arise a philosophical faith, sure-based on reason, which would preserve all that was essential in Christianity. In the preface to the *Life of Jesus* Strauss writes as follows: "The author is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The certainty of this can alone give

[1] Ex. vii. 17 ff. [2] Ex. xv. 23 ff. [3] 2 Kings ii. 19 ff.

calmness and dignity to our criticism, and distinguish it from the naturalistic criticism of the last century, the design of which was, with the historical fact, to subvert also the religious truth." [1] At the end of the book Strauss sketches the outlines of his reconstructed Christianity,[2] and seeks to show that in essence Christian and philosophical truth are one. The basis of the whole reconstruction is the Hegelian doctrine of the unity of the divine and human, which makes incarnation a perpetual necessity for God. "This is the key to the whole of Christology, that as subject of the predicates, which the Church assigns to Christ, we place, instead of an individual, an idea"—the idea, that is, of humanity.[3] Our age, Strauss tells us, "demands in Christology to be led to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual: a theology which, in its doctrines on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly a theology, but a homily." [4] The idea is all-important; the historical setting of the idea may be neglected. "When the mind has thus gone beyond the sensible history and entered into the domain of the absolute, the former ceases to be essential." [5]

The following passage, which it is worth while to quote at length, gives a good general impression of Strauss's method of dealing with Christian doctrine.

"Humanity is the union of the two natures—God become man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the child of the visible Mother, and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit; it is the worker of miracles, in so far as in the course of human history the spirit more and more completely subjugates nature, both within and around man, until it lies before him as the inert matter, on which he exercises his active power; it is the sinless existence, for the essence of its development is a blameless one; pollution cleaves to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history. It is Humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, for from the negation of its phenomenal life there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the sup-

[1] First German ed., p. xxx.
[2] Cp. section, "The Dogmatic Import of the Life of Jesus."
[3] G. Eliot's trans., p. 780.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 781.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 781.

pression of its mortality as a personal, national, and terrestrial spirit arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens. By faith in this Christ, especially in his death and resurrection, man is justified before God; that is, by the kindling within him of the idea of Humanity, the individual man participates in the divinely human life of the species. Now the main element of that idea is, that the negation of the merely natural and sensual life, which is itself the negation of the spirit (the negation of negation therefore), is the sole way to true spiritual life. This alone is the absolute sense of Christology: that it is annexed to the person and history of an individual, is a necessary result of the historical form which Christology has taken." [1]

The children ask for bread, the philosophical father gives them a stone. For the simple, unintellectual souls (and such are the majority of men) there is no spiritual nutriment in this speculative creed. Strauss is aware of the fact, and of the difficulty in which his criticism must place the preacher who has to minister to an ordinary congregation. What is the preacher to do? The only advice which Strauss can offer is that he shall do his best, while retaining the use of the popular forms of belief, to direct the minds of his audience to the spiritual truth which underlies them, thus gradually educating them to dispense with history, and to rest content with the truth of ideas.[2]

Thirty years after the publication of the *Life of Jesus*, Strauss wrote *A New Life of Jesus for the German People*.[3] The former had been intended for scholars and theologians; the latter was avowedly popular. Public opinion, which was not ripe in the earlier period for the shock which Strauss intended to administer, had grown riper in the interval. The time had come for plain speaking in language which could be understood by the average educated man. In addition, the thirty years which had elapsed had seen a marked advance in the criticism of the New Testament, and Strauss felt the need of revising some of his earlier conclusions.[4]

A stream of attack had been directed against the original volume. Baur and his school had thrown a flood of new light

[1] *Life of Jesus* (G. Eliot's trans.), p. 780.
[2] *Ibid.*, sect. 152.
[3] Authorised trans. in 2 vols., 1865.
[4] Cp. Introduction, vol. i.

upon many of the problems of primitive Christianity. Matters therefore did not stand where they stood in 1835. It is unnecessary to discuss this new life at any length. Its criticism of current orthodoxy is no whit less trenchant, its abhorrence of everything supernatural is equally intense. It bears marks indeed of an increased animus against traditional Christianity, which is perhaps explained, when we recall that for a while, under pressure of criticism, Strauss had been ready to make some concessions to orthodoxy. In particular, he had modified his views as to the place of Jesus in Christianity. Instead of treating Him merely as the embodiment of an idea, he approached Him as a unique historical figure whose creative power was the main source of the religion called after Him. But controversy had embittered him; he withdrew what he had conceded, and flung out against the world a challenge even more defiant than the first. He recognised, however, the force of some of Baur's arguments, and the result is a change in the presentation of his thesis. In this second book more pains is taken to trace out the development of the mythical conception of Christ in the mind of the Church, to show how it arose and passed from stage to stage, and in particular how the fully developed Christology of the period 70–150 A.D. could be derived from the simple beliefs of the period 1–70 A.D. The treatment throughout is more genetic.[1] In addition, Strauss had seen that his reliance upon the mythical theory had been too great. Myth could not carry the whole weight of the superstructure which he had put upon it. Accordingly in the *New Life of Jesus* he combines his original mythical theory with the "tendency" theory of Baur.

It is easy to understand the consternation produced in religious circles, both in Germany and England, when the contents of the *Leben Jesu* became known. Here was the supernatural entirely banished; the Gospel story reduced to myth with only a bare residuum of historical fact, and that almost incapable of separation from its imaginative presentation: above all Christ set forth, not as the creator, but as the creation of the Church. But the very extravagance of Strauss's conclusions led, as we have seen, to the rise of a sounder literary and historical criticism. In particular, attention was

[1] Cp. Pfleiderer's Introd. to 5th ed. of G. Eliot's trans., pp. xxii.–iii.

focussed on the problem with which Strauss never really grappled, why the primitive Christian community transferred to Jesus the attributes of the Messiah. There must have been something unique about Him (as Strauss later for a while admitted) for the process of deification ever to have begun. There must, as Schleiermacher felt, be some adequate explanation of the continued existence through many centuries of a Christian experience which refers itself to Christ as its originating and sustaining cause. Strauss's whole energies were directed to an analysis of the religious mind of the Jewish people, as they wove their web of fancy round the Person of Jesus. The deeper problem is, why they felt it necessary to weave the web at all. We cannot but feel that Strauss came to his task with his mind already made up. He was saturated with Hegelianism, and was determined to turn the historical facts of the Gospel into terms of the "notion," and to make Christianity march on all fours with the absolute philosophy. He distorted the facts to suit his preconceived theory. The tendency already present in Hegel's writings to defend the absolute character of Christianity at the expense of its historicity comes in Strauss to completion, The historical basis of the religion is practically neglected altogether. Strauss's work remains a triumphant witness to the power of the human imagination. Few castles in the air have been more elaborately constructed; few have fallen more quickly to ruin at the touch of criticism.

It is of interest to note that at the close of his life Strauss abandoned the idealistic interpretation of Hegel, and became a materialist. It is true that he did not go so far along the road of naturalism as Feuerbach, who reduced theology to anthropology, and would allow the existence of nothing in the universe higher than man, and man construed in terms of materialism. Strauss would still have men recognise their ethical and intellectual superiority to natural forces. But at the heart of it his philosophical creed was naturalism. He left unsolved, as every materialist must, the problem of how in a world governed by mechanical forces alone there can arise a being who frames for himself moral and spiritual ideals.

Strauss's criticism of the Gospels had been, in the main, a criticism of the events, not of the records. He does, indeed, try to show that the hypothesis of contemporary narratives

will not hold, and that there is no external evidence that the canonical Gospels were in existence till more than half a century after the events which they describe. But he does not develop his literary criticism at any length. Yet such criticism was the essential preliminary to any history of Christ or primitive Christianity. No sound Christian history could be written until criticism had acquired an exact knowledge of the documents of the New Testament, their origin, date, and interrelationship, and had further made itself acquainted with the general conditions of life and thought amid which the Church started on its career. It is one of the chief merits of Baur and his followers, that they set themselves to lay anew the foundations of New Testament criticism. Baur saw that the mythical theory of Strauss could not be defended. It was too purely imaginative; it left the Person of Jesus an unintelligible mystery; it provided no real solution of the origin of the Christian consciousness. More historical research was required.

Schleiermacher, starting from the Christian consciousness as a fact of living experience, worked back from that to the Person of Christ as its source and cause. Baur, too, began with the finished product, with the development in its final stages, and endeavoured in the light of them to render intelligible the earlier steps of the process. But the finished product for Baur was not Christian experience, but Christian doctrine, the fully developed Christology which he found existing in the middle of the second century. He began his studies in Christianity, not with the Gospels, but with the writings of St. Paul.[1] In 1831 he published an essay on *The Christ-party in the Corinthian Church*, and followed this up in 1835 with an important work on the Pastoral Epistles. In 1845 appeared his *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*. Not till two years later did he publish *The Canonical Gospels*. As has been often pointed out, the order of Baur's studies has an important bearing upon the general conclusions which he reached. He found, as he investigated the Pauline writings, evidence of early antagonisms in the Christian Church; and, notably, the antagonism between a narrower Judaic Christianity, and the universalism of the Apostle of the Gentiles. There

[1] Cp. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 266.

were other antagonisms also, such as that between Gnosticism and the Catholic faith, clear traces of which he sees in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, but the dominating conflict is between a Christian Judaism and the world-wide catholicism of St. Paul. The presence of these conflicts proved to Baur that the life of the early Christian community was a complex thing, which needed much careful investigation of the conditions under which it was maintained, and suggested to his mind two further reflections. The first was the probability that the key to the understanding of Christian dogma was to be found in a survey of the general environment in which the primitive Church developed, and in the impulse given to its growth by such a masterful mind as that of St. Paul. The second was the probability that, if antagonisms existed in St. Paul's day, they existed still earlier, and would be found in the Gospels; or, rather, that a study of the Gospels would reveal that they too, like the Epistles, were composed in the interests of certain parties or tendencies. Such, indeed, he claims to prove is the case, St. Matthew being written in the interests of the narrower or particularist section of the Church, St. Luke in the interests of universalism. Baur having once mounted his steed, rides him to death. Just as Strauss was obsessed by the belief that the glorification of Jesus resulted from the attribution to Him of Messianic ideals and qualities, so Baur is obsessed by the conviction that the history of Christianity up to 150 A.D. is the history of the conflict of tendencies, and particularly of the conflict between universalism and particularism. All the history is fitted into that preconceived mould, all the documents are interpreted from that point of view. Baur, like Strauss, was a Hegelian, and it is his Hegelianism which explains his method. For him the important thing is the idea; history is a battlefield of ideas and tendencies. Creative personalities, indeed, there are in history, notably for Baur St. Paul, who, as we shall see, in his system stands out as the originator of Christianity. But even St. Paul is treated as the exponent of the tendency to universalism. Now, if St. Paul could be credited with such creative power, why could not Baur allow the same creative power to Jesus? The answer is that, with Strauss, he could find no place for the supernatural. To credit Jesus with

originating so stupendous a development as Christianity would be to confess Him supernatural. The causes of the growth of Christianity must be found elsewhere, within the system, not in a personality standing outside it.

Stated in broad outline Baur's theory is this. The earliest form of Christianity was a narrow Ebionite Judaism which, if it had been left to itself, would never have passed beyond the limits of a sect. But the conversion of St. Paul worked a change in the fortunes of the religion. He conceived the idea of Christianity as a universal faith to which any form of particularism was abhorrent. To preach this universalism became the object of his life. He proved himself victorious, but only after a long struggle with the rival teaching. Indeed, he did not live to see the full fruits of his victory. A century and a half was needed before the Catholic faith of the Church was finally supreme. St. Paul did more than anyone else to bring about the triumph, but the doctrine of the Logos, as developed in St. John's Gospel, also contributed largely to the ultimate result. By the middle of the second century, as Baur thinks, the Logos doctrine won official acceptance, and the lines of orthodox theology were firmly laid. The story of the Christian Church in the first hundred and fifty years of its existence is thus the story of antagonisms being gradually overcome, and of oppositions being transcended in a higher unity and synthesis.

What is to be said of Baur's work by way of praise or condemnation?

(*a*) In the first place he made a large contribution to critical knowledge, and particularly to the knowledge of the general conditions amid which primitive Christianity grew up. He thus helped to create a historical temper which should bring a sympathetic insight to bear upon the origin of the religion. (*b*) He made prominent the problem of St. John's Gospel. He was the first to insist that the key to its interpretation is to be found in the purpose with which the author wrote it. Up to his time it had been accepted by the great majority of critics as of equal historical value with the synoptics. Baur showed that the question of its historicity was complicated by the presence in it of ideal motives and a distinct doctrinal aim. The problem was to discover how far the existence of a con-

scious purpose in the mind of the author deprived it of its historical value. (*c*) Thirdly, he raised the question of the place of St. Paul in the development of Christianity, and so set for future investigation the problem of determining the relation of the Pauline Christology to the Christology of the synoptic Gospels. (*d*) Lastly, he destroyed the mythical theory of Strauss. Strauss had placed his whole emphasis upon the unconscious idealising tendency of the popular mind. Baur made the conscious purpose of groups and single persons the important factor in the growth of Christianity. Strauss wrote with an airy disregard of history. Baur at least made a genuine attempt to come to grips with historical facts and conditions.

But the condemnation which we must mete out to him outweighs the praise.

(*a*) He neglects, as Strauss and Hegel had done, the Person of Christ. To understand a process of development you must read it both ways, from the end back to the beginning, and forward from the beginning to the end. Baur, finding, as he thinks, in the antagonisms of the latter half of the first century the key to the story of the Church, reads the process backwards, but he stops at Christ. To which party or tendency can He be attached? If we say that He belongs to the particularist party, then St. Paul is the real creator of Christianity. If we say that He was a universalist, then St Paul was only interpreting the mind of his Master, and the power and honour belong to Christ. Then Christian theology is no mere human invention, resting on no adequate basis of truth, but is the attempt, doubtless imperfect, but abundantly justified, to interpret the life and work of a historical Person, who moves on a plane not wholly explicable by the categories of naturalism. Baur, accepting with Strauss the belief that incarnation is a continuous process operating throughout all human history, is brought up sharp by the presence of One who claims to be in a special sense the Incarnate Son of God. (*b*) The importance which Baur attaches to St. Paul is unwarranted by the facts. He seems to overlook the fact that St. Paul never claims to be inventing a new doctrine, but always refers to the accepted belief of the Christian community as proof that he is not innovating. Did he preach Christ risen and ascended? His resurrection and ascension, with all that

they implied about the Person, were already part of the common faith. Paul was the apostle of universalism, but only because Christ had already taught it. (*c*) Thirdly, Baur presses his theory of antagonisms too far. He did good service in pointing out that they existed, and that an element of struggle was present in the early development of the Church; but he shows a striking lack of the historic sense, when, for example, he suggests that the Acts of the Apostles was written with the purpose of conciliating the rival universalist and particularist parties. The real object of the author of the book was historical, to give an account of the spread of Christianity, and perhaps also to prove to the Roman authorities that Christianity should be tolerated, since it involved no menace to the state. Baur minimises the historical value of the book, which later criticism has shown to be, at any rate in a large portion of it, accurate and trustworthy.

Baur, we cannot help feeling, was forcing history to suit his own preconceived opinions. Matthew the Gospel of particularism, Luke the Gospel of universalism, St. John the Gospel of conciliation—what is this but Hegelianism with its triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, arbitrarily imposed upon history? His literary criticism was vitiated by his assumption that the writings of the New Testament everywhere reflected the party tendency, and that the discovery of the tendency was a sure guide to their place in the evolution of Christianity. Baur had his ardent defenders, such as Zeller and Schwegler, but criticism even among those who can be reckoned as belonging to the Tübingen school was not long in discovering the artificiality of his scheme. The antagonism between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles was shown not to be so acute as Baur had made it, while the final reconciliation was proved to have been effected before 150 A.D. And it became increasingly apparent that the Pauline rendering of Christianity was but the natural outgrowth of the teaching of Christ himself.[1]

[1] Planck and Köstlin, for example, both argue that, if Paul is to be regarded as the founder of Christianity, some attempt must be made to show how he reached the constructive ideas to which he gave such forcible expression. Some link of connection had to be established between Paul and Christ. Köstlin too points out that primitive Judaistic Christianity is not to be identified with a narrow Ebionitism, but had in it elements which were capable of a natural development into a broader creed. Cp. Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, pp. 233–5.

From the point of view of the orthodox believers there was little to choose between the systems of Strauss and Baur. Both denied supernaturalism; both left the Person of Christ in obscurity; both removed from Christian theology much of the basis of historical fact on which it rested. Both translated religion into terms of thought, and confused the faith of simple souls with speculative theories, But they effected this salutary result. They set criticism on a surer path, put new life into theology, and taught apologists the value of doubt.

CHAPTER XIII

SCHLEIERMACHER

SCHLEIERMACHER'S influence upon the theology of the nineteenth century has been greater and more enduring than that of his rival and contemporary Hegel. Indeed, if the renewed interest shown to-day in the study of his writings may be taken as an indication, that influence is probably on the increase. Modern theology looks to him as its founder. The impulse which he gave it has spread in many directions. Like Coleridge he may be described as a "seminal" genius. Founding no distinct school, he has yet acted as a leaven upon minds of varying bent, and has given to theological study a new ideal and impetus.

His two chief theological writings are the *Discourses on Religion to the Educated among its Despisers* (1799), and *The Christian Faith—A Systematic Exposition Based on the Principles of the Evangelical Church* (1821–22). The latter, the work of his maturer mind, may be taken to be the best illustration of his thought.[1] In it the earlier individualism and romanticism of the *Discourses* is tempered. He has learned (and here he reacts upon the individualism of the eighteenth century) that the individual needs the community for his religious development. He has learned also to appreciate better the finality and uniqueness of Christianity when compared with other religions. But in both books he remains true to his fundamental principle, that the root of religion is to be found in feeling. With his whole being Schleiermacher protested against the intellectualising of Christianity and the barrenness of rationalism, against any system which would

[1] Considerable discussion has taken place over the relation of these two treatises. Schleiermacher's own view was that, though in form and method of treatment there is a wide difference between them, yet in the substance of their thought they agree. For a summary of the dispute cp. the note on p. 158 of Brown's *The Essence of Christianity*.

exclude feeling and emotion from religion. He reminds us here of Herder, but with this important difference, that, while Herder's appreciation of religion seems rather to have been æsthetic, Schleiermacher's was based upon a deep experience of personal piety. He never forgot the lessons which he had learned while he was a member of the Moravian Church. An inward devoutness characterised him throughout life.

The *Christian Faith* opens with a definition of religion as a specific feeling of our dependence on a power outside ourselves.[1] This feeling, says Schleiermacher, is a basal fact of our constitution, an immediate and original experience, universal in its range. It is an ultimate fact that the soul is immediately aware of God. And this awareness is not the result of any deliberate attempt to withdraw from the world, and to find God by self-concentration, or in forced passivity to await the touch of the divine. God is present to every man as he goes about his daily work. Religion, therefore, is natural to man, is part of his God-given endowment. But though Schleiermacher maintains that in this feeling of dependence man comes into immediate contact with God, the God thus experienced can hardly be called personal. He is power, cause, the something not-ourselves on which we depend. Pfleiderer[2] attributes many of the defects in Schleiermacher's theology to the immense influence which Spinoza exercised upon him. His object was to free theology from the trammels of speculative philosophy, and to give it a new basis in Christian experience. But at every turn, so Pfleiderer contends, he allowed Spinozism to shape his own creed, with the result that his doctrine of God is practically indistinguishable from pantheism. Schleiermacher, however, himself denied that he was teaching pantheism. The feeling of dependence, he said, even though it might be regarded in its simplest form as a feeling of the unity of all things, passed at once into a definitely religious temper of mind, for which God was something far more concrete and personal than a speculative unity correlative to a world of multiplicity and change.[3] We

[1] In this account of the *Christian Faith* I have followed somewhat closely the condensation, which is far more than a summary, of the book given in Cross's *The Theology of Schleiermacher*.

[2] *Development of Theology*, bk. ii. ch. ii.; cp. also Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 312, 313.

[3] Cp. the *Discourses*, 3rd ed., Oman's translation, note, p. 24.

shall, however, have to consider later the significance of this definition of religion in terms of feeling. What is important to note here is the good service which Schleiermacher performed, in finding a place for feeling in religion, and in insisting that religion was a universal factor in human life. The orthodox opinion of his day regarded theology as consisting of a body of dogmas which men were required to believe; and readiness to accept them was made the test of a man's faith. A widespread scepticism resulted from this attempt to define religion in terms of a creed, and to impose that creed by authority. Schleiermacher showed that religious experience was prior to, and independent of, this intellectual construction. It was not by the road of the intellect that the soul came into living contact with God.

The *Christian Faith* goes on to examine the Christian consciousness, which it was Schleiermacher's special object to interpret. He finds the peculiarity of it to consist in the fact that the Christian refers the whole of his religious life, its impulses and aspirations, to a source outside himself, to Christ as the Redeemer of men. Each of the great religions he conceives as the embodiment of some definite type of feeling, which must be clearly grasped, if the religion is to be understood. The specific feeling of Christianity is the feeling of redemption. Thus he describes faith as the reference of our religious experience to Christ as its cause. The justification of such reference lies in the feeling of inward certainty which accompanies our higher self-consciousness. But such faith, he points out, can exist only in the Christian community. Men everywhere tend to form associations, and religion, as a fundamental element of human nature, provides a bond of union. Religious associations are the natural outcome of the religious impulse, and furnish the soil in which alone that impulse can grow. No one could insist more strongly than Schleiermacher upon the value of corporate Christianity, and it is this which makes him attach such high worth to the sacrament of Holy Communion. Christ founded a Society, and is working in and through it unceasingly. Central in his theology is the thought that the influence of the Christian society upon its individual members is just the redeeming influence of Christ extended through the centuries.

Schleiermacher saw clearly that an explanation was required of the existence of the Christian consciousness. It was a present-day fact, and behind it lay a long history. The same distinctive consciousness could be traced in all generations of Christians, since the day that Christ's religion came into being. How could you account for so striking a phenomena? An effect so great demands a cause adequate to produce it. That cause, Schleiermacher argues, can be none other than Christ, the original creator of the consciousness and its perpetual sustainer. The faith of the disciple cannot explain the Person of his Master: the Person of the Master can, and does, explain the faith. The consciousness of Christ shows that He was in perfect union with God, and that in Him God dwelt fully. He had the God-consciousness in its completeness. Now that same union with God Christ purposed to achieve in man, and Christian experience attests that this has been His work throughout the ages. By His redeeming agency He has, through the channels of His society, continually been bringing individuals into closer union with God. The creative power of Christ in human history is one of the determinative principles of Schleiermacher's thought.

With regard to the Person of Christ, Schleiermacher asserts emphatically that He cannot be explained as merely the product of antecedent conditions. He is unique, not only in function, as the world's Redeemer, but in His consciousness of God. So that His appearance must be called a miraculous manifestation; something, that is, which requires for its explanation the postulate of a special act of divine causality. Yet we must, says Schleiermacher, be careful what meaning we attach to miracle. The appearance of Christ belongs to history, and must therefore be regarded as normal and non-miraculous in its mode. Behind it lies a special action of God, but it takes its place in the ordinary course of events. Could we transcend, as God can, the antithesis of natural and supernatural, we should be able to place Christ's coming in its proper connection with the evolution of the natural order. Since we cannot do that, it must always appear to us miraculous. Schleiermacher's creed is one of natural supernaturalism.[1]

[1] It is difficult to determine with precision Schleiermacher's views upon miracle. He may almost be said not to be interested in the question, which was

As to the work of Christ, he insists that it is a mistake to treat any part of it in isolation from the whole. Redemption, for example, must not be limited to the death on the Cross. Just as the revelation which He brought flows from the total impress of His Personality, so is it with His redemptive activity. It is by the fullness of His nature that He imparts to men, through His Church, His own sinless perfection. The work of transformation is of course gradual; in every man there is the conflict between sin and grace, between the sense-consciousness and the God-consciousness. But the victory must finally rest with Christ. Hence, says Schleiermacher, we may confidently look forward to the universal redemption of mankind, and the perfect establishment of His kingdom.

Schleiermacher's explanation of the nature and scope of dogmatic theology follows along the lines of the principles already laid down. Dogmatics must start, he tells us, from the basis of Christian experience, must not travel beyond it, and must make that experience the standard by which it tests its intellectual constructions. Everything must be excluded from dogmatics which cannot be referred back to the experience of Christ's redeeming power. Dogmatics he describes as a historical discipline. We shall understand what he means by this, if we recall his contention that each of the great religions is the expression of a particular type of feeling, and that the form which the development of any religion has taken can be understood only if its typical feeling is first thoroughly appreciated. That feeling must be sought for in the religious experience of the present, as well as in the records and institutions of the past. A purely speculative theology was in danger of losing itself in the mists of theory. Schleiermacher wished to bring theologians back to the facts of religious experience. Christian dogmatics, then, is a historical discipline, because it is concerned with the specific consciousness of redemption. Theology should grow naturally out of Christian experience, and should develop as its subject-matter develops. The Christian consciousness continually wins for

of central importance for the rationalist theologians. His reconstruction of theology was based on a method for which historical facts were of subordinate import. Cp. Schweitzer's remarks in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 62–66.

itself a richer content; there must be a corresponding progress in the theology. It follows that no doctrinal statement can ever be regarded as final, but must always be liable to revision and restatement. Schleiermacher laid his finger upon the weakness of contemporary theology, both Protestant and Roman. It lacked organic unity; it was a mere body of doctrines, held together by no living bonds. Intellectual acceptance of these doctrines was regarded as the one thing necessary for salvation. A frost of intellectualism had settled upon the soul, and was checking the spontaneous flow of religious feeling. It was the age of the evidential treatise, the triumph hour of the theological speculative expert.[1]

Experience, then, of the redeeming activity of Christ provides the material out of which the theologian is to construct his dogmatic system. But Schleiermacher excludes from dogmatics much that traditional theology includes in it. Dogmatics, he says, can take no account of Christ's resurrection, ascension, or return to judgment, since these form no part of the experience of His redemptive power. Belief or disbelief in them is determined by scientific investigation into the trustworthiness of the records. The redeeming activity of Christ is not mediated by, and has no connection with, events belonging to the visible order.[2] Further, the faith of the original disciples in Christ was prior to any expectation of these occurrences, and since that time there have been many Christians whose faith has not been based upon the credibility of reputed historical events. Christ's self-communication to man, which is the essence of His work as Redeemer, is independent of the historical records.

Now these conclusions of Schleiermacher lead us to examine more carefully his conception of Christ. We have seen how

[1] Cp. the *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology* (1806), in which Schleiermacher sketched an ideal for theological science, based upon the conception of an organic inter-relationship between all the branches of the study.

[2] Under the heading "Prophetical Articles," Schleiermacher discusses the doctrines of the Second Advent, the Final Judgment, the Resurrection of the Body, and Eternal Blessedness. He points out the difficulties inherent in any attempt to represent these in terms of our ordinary experience, and the impossibility of getting rid for thought of the contradictions which they involve. He treats them therefore as symbolic utterances of faith. Cp. Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 320–21.

he insists that the Christian consciousness, continuous through the centuries, can be explained only by reference to Christ as its creative source. But can we say that this Christ is a historical figure? Has Schleiermacher really reached the Jesus of history, and shown that the Christ of the creeds is one with the Jesus of the Gospels? Christianity is a historical religion, based on historical facts. If the revelation brought by Christ consists, as Schleiermacher maintains, in the total impression derived from His Personality, then, in estimating that impression, we must surely take account of all the events recorded about Him. Criticism, it is true, has to determine whether a given fact, the resurrection for example, is a fact or not. If it decides that it is a fact, then that fact must be brought into relation with the inner experience. Our quarrel with Schleiermacher is, that he does not succeed in reaching a historical figure. He does not start with investigating the historical Christ from whom the whole development of Christianity takes its origin. But he starts with the Christian consciousness, and constructs an ideal Christ to match it. It is doubtless true that the disciples had faith in Jesus prior to His resurrection, but can it be denied that the quality of that faith was altered, after they had satisfied themselves that He had risen? Here a historical fact, whether real or supposed, modified their consciousness of His redeeming power. Part of the content of the consciousness which is to form the material for dogmatics is acceptance of certain historical facts by the believer. Schleiermacher is so interested in the ideal Christ that he neglects the historical Jesus. This accounts for, or, on the other hand, is explained by, his preference for St. John's Gospel, and his tendency to set it up as a standard by which to criticise the synoptic narratives. And the fact that he speaks throughout of Christ, and not of Jesus, is additional proof of his neglect of history.[1] Yet it remains true, that, though he did not himself reach the historical Jesus, he gave a powerful impulse to the movement which sought to recover Him. Criticism, confronted with his assertion that the determining factor in the development of Christianity was the Person of its Founder, set itself to picture the life and character of Jesus, as He walked among men in Palestine.

[1] Cp. Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 322–23.

Schleiermacher's definition of religion in terms of feeling has been the subject of much criticism. He is charged with interpreting religion too narrowly, and failing to see that religion affects the whole personality, giving a consecration to will and intellect, as well as to emotion. Now it is true that, in his revolt against intellectualism and the rationalistic tendency to regard religion as a mere appendage to morality, he seems to place an undue emphasis upon the element of feeling. But it must be remembered that he classes Christianity among the teleological religions, as opposed to those which belong to the æsthetic type. In the latter passivity characterises the worshipper; in the former the worshipper is filled with the spirit of ethical activity. Thus the Christian's supreme object is to promote the advance of the Kingdom of God. In him the feeling of dependence gives rise at once to practical morality and the religious impulse broadens out into a consecration of all his powers. As was said earlier, it is a mistake to suppose that Schleiermacher was a mystic. Communion with God becomes real in the doing of the daily duty. The infinite is to be found only in the world of the finite. "The Infinite of which we are conscious is not a vague unconditioned, but the infinity of existence in general, as it realises itself through the concrete world of experience with its endless richness and variety."[1] Schleiermacher was seeking for the common element in all religions, and he found it to be the feeling of dependence on the infinite, but he was not content to offer that as the definition of religion. On the contrary, he saw that religious experience was so varied, that each religion required definition in terms of its own specific type of feeling; and that in the teleological religions, and particularly in Christianity, the basal feeling of dependence maintained itself only in the activity of the whole man. It is, then, a misunderstanding of Schleiermacher to say that religion was for him merely feeling. It would be truer to say that he thought of it as the experience of God within the soul; an experience which, while it was to be referred back to the feeling of dependence as its source, and found in feeling its most spontaneous expression, yet involved the exercise of will and intellect. His characterisation of God may legitimately be criticised as too vague, and as falling short

[1] Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

of the Christian conception; but can we call him wrong in insisting that feeling is the determinative factor in a living religious experience?[1]

If, now, we try to estimate Schleiermacher's influence upon theology, we shall single out the following points as of primary importance.

(*a*) He transformed the whole conception of the scope and method of the science by raising to a new level the dispute between the rationalists and supernaturalists. Both of these viewed theology as a body of dogmas, a system of objective truths which the intellect had to accept. They differed in their opinions as to the source whence these truths were derived, and were not in entire agreement as to their dogmatic content, but they both regarded dogma as something static, as a permanent framework into which religious experience had to be fitted. Schleiermacher reversed this position. He sought to fit the dogma to the experience, and made the Christian consciousness of Christ's redeeming activity the standard by which dogmatic statements were to be tested. He was the champion of experimental religion. He broke down the artificial distinction between natural and revealed religion, and showed that religion was natural to man, and required no support from philosophy. It had a life of its own, and was the expression of the soul's immediate contact with God. His conception of the method of dogmatics is certainly too subjective; but he has the distinction of having pointed out that doctrine divorced from life is dead, and of having held up before the student the ideal of a theology, all of whose parts should be in organic relationship, which should exhibit a natural affiliation of doctrines, and whose determinative principle should be the religious idea truly conceived. His influence in this matter upon the theological thought of the century was far-reaching. The Ritschlian school looks to him as its direct inspirer. From him is largely derived our modern interest in the psychology of religion, and our insistence that in our final interpretation

[1] I am not in any way implying that religion is a matter of feeling only. Religion involves the whole man. It looks outward to an object which must be intellectually construed. All that I mean is that in the religious experience of the average man feeling is the spring of action. Cp. Note D, at the end of this chapter.

of reality religious experience, the experimental consciousness of God within the heart, has a right to be heard.

(*b*) Schleiermacher, it follows, was the champion of a progressive theology. If dogma is to be the transcript of experience, it must change as the experience changes. There can be no finality about any dogmatic statement. It was Schleiermacher's object to destroy the traditional view of dogma as a body of objective truth imposed by authority. But, it may be asked, has he left any room for authority anywhere? Is not the logical outcome of his position this, that there are as many theologies as there are persons? Now Schleiermacher would not have shrunk from making such an assertion. He was the apostle of individuality; it was the very variety of religious experience which proved to him that religion was alive. But his defence of individual liberty in religious belief is qualified in two ways. First, religion is a social thing; it is only in a religious society that the individual's consciousness of God can develop. Secondly, Schleiermacher claims finality for the Christian religion, and a position of authority for its Founder. With regard to the first point, the social character of religion implies the presence of common beliefs. Religious anarchy does not, as a matter of fact, exist. The authority of the common spirit of the community controls its individual members, though in no two of them is religious experience precisely alike, With regard to the second point, the finality of Christianity and the authority of Christ, Schleiermacher's position demands some investigation. By what right, it is asked, does he, starting as he does from the feeling which finds God everywhere in the universe, give a unique place to the historical fact of Christ's redemption? Or finding, as he does again, the essence of Christianity in the subjective experience of the consciousness of redemption, how can he, with any fidelity to his principles, pass from that to a historical Person as the source of the consciousness? In a word, what room is there for historical facts in his speculative system? "The historical actuality of an archetypal Christ is not satisfactorily deducible from the Christian consciousness." [1]

Now it is not difficult to defend Schleiermacher in his con-

[1] Dorner, quoted by Selbie, p. 131 of his *Schleiermacher*, in *The Great Christian Theologies* series.

tention that Christianity is the final religion, if we remember that the undifferentiated feeling of dependence is nothing more than the common groundwork of religion. That feeling passes at once into feelings which admit, as the bare feeling of dependence does not, of a qualitative estimate. In each of the great religions Schleiermacher sees the presence of a specific type of feeling. In Christianity he finds the specific type to be the consciousness of redemption. Now the redemptive relation, it may fairly be argued, is the most comprehensive of all the relations in which man stands to God.[1] Christ the Redeemer includes Christ the Master and Teacher, and all the activities of God in relation to man may be summed up under the head of Redemption. Christianity may thus be regarded as the final religion, because it has expressed the relation of God to man in a form which can never be outgrown. Our appreciation of the content of Redemption may change, it may become richer as experience develops, but there will never be a time when man will cease to feel his need of a redemptive power.

Schleiermacher's real problem is to find a place in his system for the Christ of history, and it must be confessed that he has failed to do so. With all his insistence upon Christianity as a historical religion, he is really avoiding the historical problem of the Person of its Founder, and offers us a speculative Christ to match his analysis of the Christian consciousness. In other words, he does not satisfactorily prove that a historical person was the originator of our Christianity. But, unless this is done, it is always open to an objector to argue that the Christian religion is derived from other sources, and does not emanate from Jesus of Nazareth.[2] His failure to reach the historical Christ is a reflection of his general view of religion, and of the pantheistic tendency of his mind. He never rises to the clearly conceived thought of religion

[1] It must be admitted, however, that Schleiermacher, in seeking for the specific type of feeling in each religion, passes beyond feeling, and finds the peculiarity of any religion to consist in the manner in which it conceives of the relation of man to God. Feeling and the recognition of a relation are not the same. This may be taken as additional evidence that Schleiermacher did not intend to define religion in terms of pure feeling alone. Cp. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 174, note.

[2] Cp. Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

as consisting of a personal relation to a Personal God, but is content to define it impersonally.[1]

That his doctrine of God is inadequate few will deny. It must be remembered, however, that he repudiated the charge of pantheism which was brought against him, and maintained that he had not allowed his belief in the immanence of God to blind him to the truth of the divine transcendence. Yet he failed to develop any clear doctrine of God's Personality. He admitted that, if personal piety was to sustain itself, the believer must think of God as personal; but the principles of his theology held him back from making any systematic attempt to characterise God objectively. It is at this point we reach the fundamental defect of his teaching. He is throughout concerned not with what God is in Himself, but with what the religious consciousness of the believer holds Him to be. Thus he expressly denies that the divine attributes represent distinction of quality in the Deity. They relate only to "something separate in the manner in which we refer our feeling of dependence to Him." Our religious consciousness provides us with no materials for framing an objective theory of the divine nature. Pantheism would seem to be the natural issue of such teaching; and, though Schleiermacher, as we have seen, refuses to call himself a pantheist, his doctrine of God amounts to little more than a belief in a living energy, omnipresent in the universe, and everywhere causally operative. To emphasize the claims of the inner consciousness of God and of religious experience is all-important, but this is not a sufficient foundation on which to construct a doctrinal system. Theology looks outward as well as inward. It must seek to determine the objective basis of religion; it cannot do without metaphysics. Schleiermacher's attitude is too subjective, both in his treatment of God and of the Christ of history.

(*c*) Yet, though Schleiermacher failed himself to reach a historical Christ, he apprehended clearly the problem which lay before theology—a problem which, in its true import, neither rationalism nor orthodoxy had grasped. The growing interest in history, which was both parent and child of the historical method, could find no satisfaction in an uncritical

[1] Cp. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 255.

orthodoxy which accepted in a lump the whole of traditional Christianity; in a rationalism which reduced Christianity to the level of a supposed religion of nature; or in the merely speculative interpretation of Christian doctrine current in Hegelianism. The demand was for facts, and in particular for a truly historical Christ, and it became more insistent as the century progressed. The central problem for theologians was to show how the traditional Christology had grown out of the historical facts relating to Christ; or, to put the matter somewhat differently, to justify the claim of Christianity to be at once the final and universal religion, and a historical phenomenon, the heart of which was the life and personality of a definite, historical figure. In two ways Schleiermacher helped to shape the future course of theology. He insisted that the Christian consciousness must be referred to Christ as its source, and so led inquiry back to an examination of that source. He showed that the study of religion must be approached through history, each religion being the historical expression of a distinct type of feeling, and thus promoted the use of the comparative method. By reviewing religion in this way he brought to the front the problem of the relation of Christianity to other religions, and gave the death-blow to the current habit of treating it as something apart from the general course of religious development. In all religions, he taught, there was truth. The peculiar glory of Christianity lay in the fact that its truth was inclusive of whatever was true and vital elsewhere. Ever since Schleiermacher's day theology has been engaged in working out these two problems,—Wherein consists the uniqueness and universality of Christianity? What is the relation of Christianity to the Person of Christ? To neither question, and least of all to the second, did Schleiermacher give a completely satisfactory answer. But his insight enabled him to ask the questions, and he stands out as the creator of modern theology.

NOTE D

When Schleiermacher makes feeling the root of religion it is important to remember that he means by feeling something far richer than sensation, and something more than merely one element among others in human nature. He describes religious feeling as "self-conscious-

ness in its immediacy," and as "the original undifferentiated unity of thinking and willing." In the *Discourses* he writes: "The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal"; and again: "Your feeling is piety in so far as it expresses in the manner described the being and life common to you and the All. Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you." Religious feeling is a sense for Deity, a consciousness of God mediated through the emotions. It is a sense of the unity of existence, based upon the feeling of dependence; but it becomes a God-consciousness because the feeling of dependence includes a sense of, or necessitates an inference to, the divine causality. Now Schleiermacher does at times write as if religion were a matter of emotion only, and the religious attitude were one of pure passivity. Thus he describes religion as "reverent attention and submission, in childlike passivity, to be stirred and filled by the Universe's immediate influences"; and in another place says that "religion by itself does not urge men to activity at all." But this emphasis upon feeling is due to his revolt against intellectualism and the Kantian reduction of religion to morality. I do not think that he means to deny that religion is an affair of the whole personality. No one knew better than he did that man is a unity. Indeed, when we bear in mind how he describes religious feeling, we can see that it was this very unity of personality which he wished to assert. He was concerned to show that religion was no artificial or adventitious thing, but was the natural possession of the soul; and he does it by placing its roots deep down in the undivided depths of human nature. Matthew Arnold's lines "Written in Butler's Sermons" are an excellent commentary upon his teaching:

> "Affections, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
> Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control—
> So men, unravelling God's harmonious whole,
> Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours.
>
> Vain labour! Deep and broad, where none may see,
> Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
> Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
> Centred in a majestic unity."

The God-consciousness which is the inalienable possession of men underlies and colours all our religious activity. The exercise of will and intellect is necessary in the service of God, as Schleiermacher plainly implies, when he calls Christianity a teleological religion, only

at every point in the religious life the emotional content is present as the dominating factor. Schleiermacher, in a word, does not aim at offering a complete and formal definition of religion. He is more anxious to show that at the basis of all religions, and all religious activities, lies an ultimate consciousness of the union of the soul with God, which in its simplest expression is purely emotional in character,[1] but which is capable of development, and is inseparably associated with the highest activities of mind and volition.

[1] It is indeed possible to argue that the religious consciousness is not purely emotional in its simplest expression, even for Schleiermacher; for one might maintain that the recognition of the divine causality which is involved in the feeling of dependence is an inference, and therefore implies the presence of an intellectual element.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

THE causes which produced the Oxford Movement may be classified as political, theological, and general.

Political liberalism was in the ascendant in England. The Test and Corporation Acts had been repealed in 1828. In the following year the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, and in 1832 the Reform Bill. In 1833 the Government announced their intention of suppressing ten of the bishoprics of the Irish Church, after Lord Grey had warned the bishops to set their house in order. The broad effect of these changes was to widen the basis of the State, and in consequence to loosen the ties which bound Church and State together. The Commons in Parliament could no longer be said to represent the laity of the Church. Conformity to the usages and rites of the Established Church was no longer required of the legislators of the nation. But the State, in virtue of the Establishment, still retained legislative authority over the Church. Up to the present time the national character of the Church of England had been almost universally emphasized by the clergy. Church and nation were regarded as convertible terms. But now the difference between the two was being accentuated. The Church found itself threatened by a State which paid no regard to variation in theological belief, and seemed bent on destroying privilege, wherever it existed. Anxiety and unrest had for some time been felt in ecclesiastical circles. They came to a head when the Government's intention in relation to the Irish Sees was announced. Keble gave voice to the prevailing feeling in his sermon on "National Apostasy," preached in the University pulpit at Oxford in July 1833. Then followed the meeting at Hadleigh Rectory, which marked the definite inception of the Tractarian movement.

If liberalism prevailed in politics, it was no less a force in

theology. If statesmen were open enemies of the Church in the judgment of the Tractarian leaders, liberal theologians were nothing less than traitors in the camp. A spirit of questioning had been aroused by the Noetics at Oxford. The right of reason to investigate doctrines which the Church had long regarded as being beyond the reach of criticism was openly asserted. Criticism was beginning to assail the traditional view of Biblical inspiration. Arnold's powerful influence was being exercised in the promotion of opinions which seemed to make the Church merely a human institution, and Church organisations a matter of utility or convenience. Every one was a Christian, he thought, who believed that Christ was divine, and the Church was the union or brotherhood of all such believers. The time for action had come, for a reassertion of Church authority, and of the meaning of the Church as a divine institution. The Evangelicals were powerless to meet this growth of a liberal theology. They had never been thinkers, and the very rigidity of their creed exposed them, in a marked degree, to critical attack. They were lacking, moreover, in any adequate theory of the Church. The key-note of their system was individualism. The Oxford Movement, then, from one point of view, was a revolt against liberalism in theology. But from another point of view it was a fuller development of teaching which had always had a place in the Church of England, and had not been completely forgotten even in the stagnation and barrenness of the opening year of the century. An earlier chapter of this volume has treated of the Orthodox or High Church party in the years 1800–1830, and in particular of the writings of Alexander Knox, the prophet of the Oxford Movement. But it is well to remind ourselves again that the movement was not altogether such a new thing as it is sometimes represented. The Tractarian leaders always denied that they were innovators, and claimed to be restorers of ancient ways. They found sanction for their teaching in the earlier history of the Anglican Church itself.

Certain large, general influences helped also to create the movement. In the first place, a spirit of change was abroad. Men everywhere felt the need for some vitalising of theology, and some quickening of Church life. The hour was ripe for a constructive effort. The only question was what form it should

take. Evangelicalism had no effective answer to give. The liberal theologians were not sufficiently united to found a school, or lead a movement of reform. Their very liberalism tended to prevent them from forming closer ties than those knit by common intellectual sympathies, and at the same time promoted a spirit of toleration which was favourable to the growth of views diametrically opposed to their own. The field was clear for a vigorous and rapid development of High Church opinion.

In the second place, Romanticism gave a strong stimulus to the movement. There was, as I shall hope to show shortly, a fundamental opposition between Romanticism and the central aims of the Tractarian leaders, but there was also a large measure of kinship. The feeling of the Romantics for the past, their sense of the spiritual depths of human nature and of the hunger of the soul for spiritual satisfaction, their recognition of the place of emotion in life, the fresh creative impulse to which they gave birth, all fitted in with the desire to make religion a more living thing, and to produce a theory of the Church, with a corresponding Church sentiment, which should be a bulwark against liberalism, and a root from which might spring a renewed corporate life of faith. Keble, the poet of the Oxford Movement, gave expression in *The Christian Year* to the Romantic temper in its quieter mood. He taught men to see in nature a divine language and a religious symbolism. He inspired them with a love of the Church of England, her sober orderliness and discipline, her venerable history, her spiritual heroes. He quickened their imagination in the interest of religion, and thus, more than any one else, prepared the soil upon which the movement grew to maturity.[1]

Some influence, too, in fostering the movement must be allowed to the growth of the democratic spirit. In two

[1] It should, however, be remembered that *The Christian Year* contains many passages which show a temper of mind the very reverse of ecclesiastical. Dean Stanley has pointed this out in his essay on Keble (cp. vol. iv. of *The English Poets*, edited by Ward). He says:—"In doctrine, too, whether in points distinctive of High Anglicanism or in those common to Christian controversialists in general, it is noticeable how the view of the poet transcends the view of the theologian." Keble the poet was of a broader mould than Keble the ecclesiastic, just as Wordsworth the High Churchman was poles asunder from Wordsworth the interpreter of nature.

directions this influence may be traced. In the first place, the growth of democracy called attention to the fact that the Church of England had, in large measure, lost its hold upon the masses of the population. The power of the people was making itself felt. Was that power to be exercised in a religious direction, or the reverse? There was a plain call to the Church to recover the ground which it had lost, to find some battle-cry which might rally the masses round its standard, and make them feel that the Church was their own, and not merely the Church of the privileged classes. In the second place, the democratic movement meant the growth of the sense of corporate life. The brotherhood of man became an ideal which the social reformer sought to see realised in civic life. The religious reformer wished also for its realisation; and the Oxford Movement was an attempt to bring this about in the special sphere of Church life. It was the substitution of the sense of corporate churchmanship for the older individualism of the Evangelicals. Time was to prove that the fellowship of the Church, as the Tractarians conceived it, was something far too narrow to be an adequate expression, even in religion, of all that a common humanity implies; but it was the pressure of humanitarian ideals which helped in part to inspire the leaders of the movement to make the Church a common home for men of all classes.

The Oxford Movement, then, was an attempt to combat liberalism in theology, and to set up the authority of the Church as that which alone could provide a principle of order and stability, amid the changes which seemed to be threatening the very foundations of the national life. The need, admitted by all, was for reconstruction. The Tractarians offered as their solution of present difficulties a theory of the Church as God's appointed instrument for the guidance of the national life along the true path. Abroad, a similar reaction in favour of the principle of authority showed itself, but there the movement looked to Rome as the fount of authority. Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme* (1802) marked the beginning of a Catholic revival, which found its supreme expression when Joseph de Maistre in his *Du Pape*, published in 1819, urged the value of the Papacy as a bond of union among Catholics, and a source of inspiration for the life of religion. France had

undergone a revolution; England had not. It was natural, therefore, that in France the reaction should be more pronounced, and that the demand for an absolute authority should be more emphatically pressed. De Maistre sought to make the State subordinate to the Church. Newman and his friends only desired to free the Church from the control of the State. But the two movements, though they differed, because the conditions in England were not identical with those abroad, were closely connected. Both stood for the assertion of authority; both found the seat of authority in the Church; both were reactionary, and in opposition to the progressive tendencies of the age.

Now, in order that the principle of the authority of the Church might be established, it was necessary to create a feeling for the Church. It must be shown what the Church was, how it was capable of being made a common, spiritual home for all true believers. It was necessary to bring into prominence what may be called the romance of the Church.

Whately in his *Letters of an Episcopalian* had emphasized the authority and independence of the Church as a spiritual society, and the traditional High Church view had always had its defenders. But something more was needed now, as Alexander Knox had seen; something less cold, some view of the Church which could appeal to sentiment and personal affection, and could meet and satisfy religious needs. Men had to be made familiar with the inner life of the Church and its organisation, that they might learn to appreciate better the means which it had provided for training the soul, and the wisdom which had prescribed its ordered services and ritual. An intense moral and religious purpose animated the leaders of the movement. They wished to see the Church become a true spiritual mother to her children, producing in them lives of holiness and self-control. They sought to make the Church known by its fruits; and to evoke a general recognition of its divine origin. A more spiritual conception of the Church was to take the place of the mixed ecclesiastico-political view which had hitherto so largely prevailed. It was this ideal which the Tractarians set themselves to realise.

The story of the Oxford Movement has often been told, and there is no need to re-tell it here. Our task is to examine

the theological basis of the movement, to criticise some of its fundamental principles and assumptions, and to try to estimate its value as a whole.

We may begin with its appeal to the past. A feeling for the past, and a revived interest in it, were among the notes of Romanticism. Yet between the Romantic spirit and the essential spirit of Tractarianism there is a real opposition. The Oxford Movement stood for the principle of authority. It advocated the claims of ecclesiastical system, Church order, and authoritative dogmatic pronouncement. But the essence of literary Romanticism was freedom and the assertion of the principle of individuality. "Be yourself, no matter what kind of a self you are," was the Romantic maxim. It is true that many of the Romantics in Germany became Roman Catholics, and for them the past, which had at first been an attraction, grew, in matters religious, into a binding authority; while in France Romanticism in the hands of such a man as Chateaubriand was used in the interests of the Roman Church; but it cannot be denied that Romanticism was, at its core, a plea for freedom and spontaneity. Man's spirit must be left untrammelled, if he was to give play to his inborn, creative impulse, if he was to sound the depths either of his own or of the divine nature. The Romantics felt indeed the authority of the past, its charm and glamour, and to revivify the past was one of their main objects; but each left himself at liberty to revive it in his own way. Ecclesiastical councils might, under the threat of excommunication, try to impose their theological dogmas upon each succeeding generation, but art and literature, now that they were throwing off the classical yoke, knew nothing of a blind subservience to authority.

Again, the past from which much of Romanticism drew its inspiration was the Middle Ages; but it was not to these that, in the first instance, the Oxford leaders appealed. A mediæval strain was unquestionably latent in the movement from the start, but it did not receive open expression until some years had passed. It was the Anglican Church of the seventeenth century and the Church of the patristic age to which the original appeal was made. The Tractarians wished to show that the Anglican Church of the nineteenth century was identical with that of the seventeenth, and was continuous in spirit

and doctrine with the still earlier and undivided Church of the Fathers. They appealed to the past, but to a past different from that of Romanticism; and they appealed in a different spirit, and with a different intention. There are, on the other hand, distinct threads of connection between the two movements. If an interest in the past is revived at one point, it is natural that it should extend to other points. Scott's interest in the Middle Ages was not primarily a religious interest. It was not the spiritual life of mediævalism which he wished to recover. He was more concerned with the life of the soldier and knight, with the military ardours and enthusiasms of the time, with the pomps and pageants which he makes pass across his stage. In so far as the religious life of the Middle Ages expressed itself in gorgeous ritual and ceremony, or in Gothic architecture, round which romance clung naturally, Scott helped to recreate that life; but even here his interest was with the outward spectacle, not with the hidden soul. But men who had learned from Scott to love the Middle Ages would be led on to explore them on their spiritual side; and thus the general feeling of mediævalism gave rise to a definitely ecclesiastical revival in Church art, music, and architecture. Pugin threw all his energies and talents into the cause of the revival of Gothic architecture. To him above all others is due the restoration of Gothic in church building. His *Contrasts; or a Parallel between the Architecture of the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1836), had immense influence; as had also his later work, *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, the very title of which gives expression to his standing conviction that the only truly Christian form of architecture must be Gothic. Newman, though his original appeal was not to the Middle Ages, was in spirit a mediævalist. Veneration for antiquity was a marked feature of his temperament. He saw in the Middle Ages, what he wished to restore in England, a religious colour given to all human activities. The power of the Church at that epoch was really effective. Every department of life owned its sway. Life then had a unity, because it was ruled by religion. Nor could mediævalism fail to draw one who felt from his earliest years the attractions of sacramentalism, and whose intuitional philosophy tended to make him somewhat of a mystic.

What, now, are we to say of this appeal to the past made by Tractarianism? To recover a forgotten past is an ideal worthy of pursuit, for the present cannot be understood unless there is also an understanding of the past from which it has sprung. But these men did not wish to understand the present. They lacked the sympathy to divine the meaning of the new forces with which it was pregnant. They had not the insight to face its fresh problems. Accordingly they took refuge in an idealised past, as in an ark which would shelter them from the coming deluge. For them theology was not the science of a living God who was fulfilling Himself in many ways, but rather the formal study of the defined beliefs of the Christian Church at a certain period of its existence; a period which they assumed was to be the norm and pattern for all time. The object of their endeavour was, confessedly, not to construct a new theology, but to recover an old one, and this very fact suggests at the outset that their outlook was narrow. It may be said that a new theology is never needed, that the revelation, once given, suffices for all ages. There is a sense, doubtless, in which that is true; yet each generation has a right to require that its theology shall be the living expression of its own highest thought and experience. Has the revelation been given once for all? Each age must satisfy itself by critical inquiry that it is so, and then, when it has done that, it must translate the revelation into terms of its own speech, must appropriate it in its own way, and bring it to bear upon the problems which are its peculiar inheritance. The Oxford Movement had its face turned to the past, rather than to the future. There, in this idealised past, lay the Golden Age. What was wanted was to recover in their original purity the theology, the discipline, the life of the primitive Church, and hold them up before the nineteenth century as its model for imitation. But no past epoch can be so recovered in its entirety, and what of it you can recover cannot be imposed as a pattern and standard on an age which lies further down the course of history, and breathes a different atmosphere. The attempt which the Tractarians made was doomed to failure. Reason and common sense refuse to be thus fettered by the past, or to submit to an authority thus arbitrarily offered for their obedience.

This appeal to the past, again, was unhistorical in a double sense. In the first place, it was an uncritical appeal. The spirit of historical criticism was lacking in the leaders of the movement. They selected from the past what suited their theory, and left the rest. Their use of the past was eclectic, and what they held up before the world was an imaginary past which had never existed. It would not be difficult to show how uncritical was the use which they made of the patristic writers, or how many of the Tracts, those, perhaps, in particular which deal with the Apostolic Succession, are based upon assumptions which have no justification, if brought to the test of actual history. It is an easy task to write history, if you may omit whatever conflicts with your preconceived theory.

But their appeal was unhistorical in another sense. They did not, in their inquiry into the constitution of the Church, go back to the fountain-head, to the teaching of Jesus Christ. I do not mean that the Tractarians never attempt to prove that the ecclesiastical development of the fourth and fifth centuries was the legitimate and natural outcome of the primitive Gospel, but they assume that it was the only development which was in accord with the mind of Christ. In other words, in their reading of Christian history they fix upon a period when ecclesiastical organisation had assumed a highly complex form, and assume that that form alone was what the Founder of Christianity intended. But why consecrate in this fashion one or two centuries of Church life? Why rule out as wrong other developments of Christianity? In their study of the past the Tractarians came to Christ through the organised Church. Is it not more historical to come to a study of the Church through Christ? He is the creative power in Christianity. The movement took its origin from Him. His mind must surely be the standard by which Christian history is to be judged. Of the breadth and universality of Christ's teaching the Tractarians seem to have had little appreciation. They could not view Christianity as a life and a spirit. They could view it only as a life expressed in one particular type of ecclesiastical organisation. The doctrine of the Apostolical Succession, with its emphasis upon ministry and orders, so filled their minds that problems of external organisation assumed for

them an importance which no one can fairly maintain that they possessed for Jesus. Subsequent historical investigation has thrown much fresh light upon the origins of the Church, and has made it clear that the rigid theory of the Tractarians is historically indefensible. No one, I suppose, comes to a study of history with an absolutely impartial and unprejudiced mind; but if ever there was a case of history being interpreted in the interests of a particular theory Tractarianism supplies it.

Consider, next, the Tractarian theory of the Church. The Oxford leaders had a double object in view. They wished to show the grounds for the claim made by the Church of England to be the Church of Christ in these islands, and they wished to make plain the essential and necessary constitution of the Church, as they conceived it. It was a search for fundamentals, for some clear-cut theory which should give guidance in an age of religious uncertainty and conflicting opinion. There was need for a theory of the visible Church. The individualism of the Evangelical school was unsatisfying. Church and State found themselves in conflict. Arnold's ideal of the Church was abhorrent to many, and to others seemed too visionary to be capable of realisation. Historical research was forcing to the front problems as to the meaning of the continuity and unity of the Church. The occasion was ripe for a new definition.

Now the theory of the Church which the Tractarians put forward had reference, at every point, to the conditions which existed in the primitive Church, after it had received its full organisation. The model for the nineteenth century was to be found in the fourth. In Tract IV Newman thus describes the principle on which the Fathers of the primitive Church taught and acted:—

"That the Holy Feast on our Saviour's sacrifice, which all confess to be 'generally necessary to salvation,' was intended by Him to be constantly conveyed through the hands of commissioned persons. Except, therefore, we can show such warrant, we cannot be sure that our hands convey the sacrifice. We cannot be sure that souls worthily prepared . . . are partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ."

In other words, the essence of the theory of the Church is the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, and of the threefold

ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons. The sacraments, the theory teaches, are the principal means of grace, divinely ordained by Christ, but they lose their efficacy, unless those who administer them can trace back their ministerial commission through an unbroken descent from Christ Himself. The emphasis throughout is upon external continuity through episcopal succession. Newman had satisfied himself that the Anglican Church possessed the necessary continuity. It was, therefore, in this respect, one with the primitive Church, and was a true branch of the Church Catholic. But he refused the title of Church to bodies of Christians who were without bishops, or who, if they had bishops, could not prove that those bishops had received their commission from others who were in the direct line of descent from the Apostles. No reader of the Tracts can fail to see that the essence of Tractarianism lies in this doctrine of the succession. Episcopacy is held up as not merely of the *bene esse* of a Church, but as something without which there can be no Church at all. The fact of an unbroken ministerial succession is not enough; the fact is filled with a new meaning. Without the sacraments, no sure means of grace; without the duly commissioned minister, no valid sacraments; without bishops tracing their descent through the Apostles to Christ, no duly commissioned minister. For the preservation and transmission of divine truth a special organ is needed; without it the truth would not reach the souls of men. Sikes had predicted the speedy coming of a day when the article of the Creed "The Holy Catholic Church" would arrest general attention, and would be made the central issue in a striking religious revival. His prediction had come true. The Tractarians were engaged in emphasizing the neglected clause.

But difficulties met them when they began to consider the significance of the word "catholic." They were satisfied that the Church of England possessed the succession, and on the whole represented in its teaching the mind of the undivided Church of antiquity. But there were the Thirty-nine Articles. Could they be regarded as identical in doctrinal content with the Liturgy? If the demand of the average churchman was conceded, that the Articles should be taken as the standard for interpreting the rest of the Prayer Book, could it be maintained

that the Anglican Church was one in doctrine with the Church Catholic? Newman's perplexities over the point are well known. The publication of Tract 90 was his attempt to show that the Articles were patient of another and more catholic meaning.[1] By a little ingenuity, by minimising the importance of the Reformation, the Articles could be brought into agreement with the Liturgy, and the Church of England shown to be a true branch of the Universal Church. We need not discuss here either the morality of Newman's action or the causes which subsequently led to his secession to Rome. The point which requires emphasis is, that, as a result of Tractarian teaching, the national aspect of the Church of England tended to fade into the background, while its catholic aspect came into prominence. But this was interpreted, not as a catholicity of spirit and ethical ideals, but of external organisation. "The Church" meant all episcopal bodies which could prove their possession of unbroken ministerial descent. Other societies of Christians were unchurched; they had no part or lot in the divine inheritance. This was a static rather than a dynamic conception of the Church. It was therefore, however attractive it might prove to the ecclesiastical mind, unlikely to commend itself to thinkers who were becoming increasingly interested in the meaning of historical development.

The appeal made by the Tractarians was to tradition, to the past, to history as they interpreted it. But it was not long before their theory underwent a change which, by substituting for the static a dynamic view of the Church, has brought new life and vigour to the movement. The change may be described by saying that, in place of a theory of the Church as the accredited organ for the transmission of divine truth, was set up a theory of the Church as an extension of the Incarnation, and the channel through which the living Christ works His age-long work of redemption.[2] The key to the change is to be found in the growing importance attached to the sacraments, and in particular to the Eucharist. The duly commissioned minister is the agency through which the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ's life is available for the

[1] Cp. Note E, at the end of this chapter.

[2] This is well brought out in Fairbairn's *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, ch. vii. section 6.

believer. The sacraments are His life. He is in them, and the acts of the minister are His acts. The Church is His Body in no metaphorical sense. In its organisation the life, once incarnate in human form, is still incarnate. This is the theory which prevails to-day in High Church circles; and it has this advantage over the older static theory, that it allows for the possibility of development. A living Church can shape its own destiny. It can, and must, assimilate new truth. It can face the future confidently. The newer theory, again, does not repose merely on tradition. It has a philosophical and dogmatic basis in this thought of an extension of the Incarnation, and thus acquires a principle capable of continuous application to a changing present. Moehler was the source of this conception of the Church. In his *Symbolism* occurs this passage:

"Thus the visible Church, from the point of view here taken, is the Son of God Himself, everlastingly manifesting Himself among men in a human form, perpetually renovated, and eternally young—the permanent incarnation of the same, as in Holy Writ even the faithful are called 'the body of Christ.'"[1]

Moehler was here only applying to the Church in a special manner the Hegelian doctrine, derived ultimately from Schelling, of incarnation as an eternal fact, of collective humanity as the perpetual manifestation of the life of God.

In criticising the Tractarian theory of the Church one asks, first of all, whether it is in accord with the mind of Christ. Can it fairly be maintained that it is? We find Christ laying immense stress upon the spirit and ideals which should animate the new society, but saying very little about that society's organisation. Principles in abundance He laid down, but of the external embodiment which those principles were to receive He is silent. The very universality of Christianity consists in the fact that the same underlying spirit is capable of varying expression. To insist upon a rigid theory of Church organisation is to do violence to the genius of the religion. But did not Christ give a commission to the Apostles, and have we not in that fact a justification of the Tractarian defence of the succession? Unquestionably such a commission was given, and unquestionably it was necessary that the new society should

[1] P. 260, in J. B. Robertson's translation.

have some organisation and government. But there is no evidence whatever that Christ taught that any special form of organisation was essential. The Church was left to develop its own structure as need arose and occasion demanded. That there was a rapid growth of the episcopal form of government is clear; but it is equally clear that episcopacy came into being in different areas of the Church at different times, and that full communion existed between local Churches which were episcopally organised and Churches which were not. Of the theory of Apostolical Succession, as interpreted by the Tractarians, there is no trace in the earliest ages of the Church, and there is no suggestion that non-episcopal bodies were lacking in any element essential to the constitution of the Church. That episcopacy has proved itself to be of the *bene esse* of a Church few churchmen will deny. It is likely to remain the best form of ecclesiastical government, providing as it does an element of stability and a tolerable guarantee of continuity in the teaching of essential Christian truth. But if the test of discipleship is "by their fruits ye shall know them," it is nothing less than a degradation of Christ's teaching to substitute for that spiritual test of membership in His society a rigid mechanical test, such as that which Tractarianism implied. The battle still rages between those who find the true catholicity of the Church in community of ideal and spirit, and those who, unchurching some of the most vigorous Christian societies, interpret catholicity in terms of external organisation.[1] There can be little question, however, that the results of recent historical research are all in favour of the less rigid theory. The argument is sometimes used by the defenders of the stricter view that, just as an embryo adopts temporary structures, which are discarded when the adult form is reached, so the primitive Church had its period of experiment in organisation, but finally settled down to episcopacy as the mature form of Church government. As we do not look to the human embryo for our standard of what a human body should be, so we must not look to the age of

[1] A distinction should, I suppose, in strictness be drawn between individual and corporate membership in the Church Catholic. Baptism may be regarded as the only test of individual membership in the Church; while the test of corporate membership on the theory which we are considering would be adhesion to a society which possessed the Apostolical Succession. The difficulties, however, of such a double view are patent.

experiment in the Church, but must take our criterion from the later developments. This illustration or analogy appears to me to have no value at all. It begs the question at issue. The embryo's ultimate structure is already settled by the forces in the germ out of which it develops. Apart from the possibility of the emergence of a freak or monstrosity, it must grow true to type, for its growth is predetermined by racial factors. But the very question in dispute in regard to the Church is whether Christ, the germinal source of the development, did intend episcopacy to be the sole outward embodiment of His idea of the Christian society.

Nor will it avail to argue that the organisation of the Church was under the control of the Holy Spirit, and that the universal presence of episcopacy at an early date, and its continuance without a rival for so many centuries, is clear proof of the will of God. Who will dare to define the limits of the Spirit's operation, or say that the future may not have in store for us a form of organisation for the Church of which at present we have no conception? Christianity is both institution and idea, but of the two the idea is the more fundamental. The institution is the idea externalised. No single Church, nor all the Churches taken together, can be said to exhaust the fulness of the idea of a divine society permeated by the Spirit of Christ. The true Church, ideally regarded, is humanity indwelt by Christ. Any society, however organised, which accepts the teaching of Christ, and looks to Him for life and inspiration, is entitled to be called part of the Catholic Church.

The newer form of the theory, which regards the Church as an extension of the Incarnation, while it is open to most of the objections which apply to the earlier form, has special difficulties of its own. It makes, as we have seen, provision for development. It seeks to show how the Church, while still remaining true to its fundamental principles, can accept new knowledge, and harmonise it with the old. But what is meant by the Church in this connection? Not the Church Catholic, for no universal synod of episcopal Churches exists. Not that branch of the Church which is found in England; for where has the Anglican Church formally pronounced on any of the questions which interest the modern thinker? What organ does the Church possess for making any such pronouncement? The phrase

"the Church teaches this or that" means, as regards any new truth not already enshrined in its creeds or formularies, that the more intelligent minds in the Church have come to agree that certain views must be adopted. But this is only equivalent to saying that the common reason of the community, in which the members of the Church share, progressively modifies its opinions in the light of new knowledge. If the Church were formally to pronounce upon the validity of any new teaching it would add nothing to its reasonableness. The new views must commend themselves by their own inherent truth. What, again, is meant by the Catholic tradition which the Church has to conserve? The creeds embody the belief of the historic Christian society, but tradition includes much which is not in the creeds—beliefs, usages, ritual, which it is desired to perpetuate. But where is this body of tradition deposited, and who is to decide what portions of it are valid, and what are not? No answer which in any way helps the theory can be given to these questions. The only answer is, that each individual is left free to interpret Catholic tradition as he pleases. Thus what began as an organic theory of authority ends in individualism. Can any one deny that the most ardent defenders of the Catholic theory of the Church to-day are just those who most strongly display the individualist temper, making themselves their own law, and interpreting Catholic practice as it suits their fancy?

If we turn now to examine the Tractarian conception of authority we shall find similar difficulties present. Authority governs us in every region of life and thought. No sane person would wish to deny its value; but it is one thing to recognise authority as a fact, another to erect it into an independent principle. When I accept a statement on authority, I do so, not because I bow to the bare *ipse dixit* of the speaker, but because I trust his general honesty, and believe that the conclusion which he enunciates I should myself reach, if I were to investigate the matter in hand. I accept, in other words, the reasoning which lies behind the pronouncement. I regard it as an utterance of the common reason in which we both share. The statements in the creeds have come down to us invested with an immense weight of authority. They represent the organic consciousness of the Christian community, the verdict

of centuries of thought and experience. Lightly to set them aside is the height of folly. But to deny to any individual the right of criticising them, to fence them round with an impassable barrier, and to demand that they shall be forthwith accepted, because they have received the formal recognition of the Church, is irrational. Any attempt to set up authority as an independent principle, where the search for truth is concerned, is illogical. For, short of abrogating altogether my rights as a thinking being, how can I be sure that the authority which speaks is an authority, unless I am at liberty to investigate its credentials? And if I am allowed to do that, and decide in favour of the authority, I do so because I recognise in its utterances the presence of reason. And it is the reason, not the authority, which commends itself to me. Truth, if it is to become part of the man himself, must grow up in him by a natural process. It must win its way by its inherent reasonableness, and its consistence with other truths which the mind already accepts.

A further difficulty confronts the upholders of this doctrine of Church authority. The appeal made by them is to the decisions of the councils of the undivided Church. We are told that those decisions must be accepted without criticism, because the Holy Spirit presided over the deliberations of the councils and guided their members into all truth. There in these councils you have the voice of the undivided Church acting as the special organ of the Spirit. But what has happened since? No councils of the whole Church have been held, and none can at present be held, owing to the divisions of Christendom. Has the work of the Spirit been in abeyance? Are we to understand that, if a general council could once more be called, its pronouncements would be authoritative, because the guidance of the Spirit would again become effective? But this is what the Tractarian theory implies.[1] A continuous process of education by the Spirit has, we believe, been going on through all the ages; but the method by which truth has been reached has been one of gradual or piecemeal persuasion. Here one mind, there another, has seen a vision of new truth, has given that truth to the world, and has left it to be accepted by the common reason of humanity. No official organ for the

[1] This is admirably treated in ch. vi. of Inge's *Faith and its Psychology*.

promulgation of religious truth exists in any one Church, or in all the branches of the Catholic Church taken together. And there is no necessary finality in any conciliar pronouncement. Like any other society of inquirers, the Church has to feel its way toward the truth, often making mistakes, and having to reverse earlier opinions. Future ages cannot be fettered by an inherited tradition. If the creeds are to stand, they must do so only because each age in turn becomes convinced, after critical investigation, of the reasonableness of their statements. Every dogma is liable to revision in the light of new knowledge. It is a strange fact that some of the very men who were most instrumental in promoting the use of critical reason in the study of the Bible now cry out in alarm because that same critical reason is concerning itself with the creeds. The only true authority, whether in matters theological, scientific, or historical, is the authority of the common reason and experience of the race.[1] The individual who shares in it will respect its decisions; but, just because he is partaker in the common reason, he retains his freedom to criticise. Christian truth commends itself to us, not because some supposed infallible authority pronounces it to be truth, but because there is that in it to which our whole nature responds.

One outcome of Tractarianism has been the growth of ritualism in the Church of England. The ritualistic controversy belongs, it is true, to a period later than that under review in this volume, but it is convenient to say something about it here, when we are trying to estimate the effects of Tractarianism as a whole. Now it is important to remember that the original leaders of the Oxford Movement were not interested in ritual questions, and had no desire to see a more developed ceremonial established in the services of the Church. In *Loss and Gain* Newman satirises the ritualists.[2] Pusey in a letter of 1851 writes:—

[1] I am not, of course, denying that for the Christian a peculiar authority attaches to the words of Christ.

[2] In a letter from Newman to Henry Wilberforce, dated January 1849, the following passage occurs: "I have heard something about you which makes me sad—that you countenanced on November 1st the changes in Margaret Street, which (if what I hear they are) I will not designate. What have you to do with *Subdeacons* and the like? I should have thought you far too sensible a fellow to go into such ways. While you stick to the old Church of England

"I was not ritualist enough to know until the other day that the act of turning had any special meaning in the consecration. And it certainly seemed against the rubric that consecration should take place so that they cannot see it. Dear Newman consecrated to the last of his consecrations (*i.e.* as an Anglican) at the north end of the altar."

Keble never wore vestments, or adopted advanced ritual usages, and deprecated the fashion of non-communicating attendance at the Holy Communion on the ground that it might lead to superstition and the fostering of a belief in a "quasi-sacramental virtue" in so attending. And in 1865 he protested against "the disparaging tone sometimes used in speaking of mid-day communion."[2] One more quotation from Pusey may be given. "It seems beginning at the wrong end for ministers to deck their own persons; our own plain dresses are more in keeping with the state of our Church, which is one of humiliation. . . . It would be making an idol of self while seeming to honour God and the Church. . . . On this ground I should deprecate seeking to restore the richer style of vestments used in Edward VI's reign.[3]

But, though the interest of the Tractarian leaders was in doctrine rather than ritual, the ritualistic movement was latent in Tractarianism. When attention was concentrated on the sacraments as the chief means of grace, and on the commissioned minister as the channel through which this grace passed, it was inevitable that external expression should be sought for the dogmatic belief. As a more definitely dogmatic interpretation of the Eucharist became current, and increasing importance was attached to this sacrament, the desire grew to heighten the ritual which surrounded the observance of the rite. Ritual is dogma translated into symbolism and outward form. Apart from the dogma which underlies it,

ways you are respectable. . . . When you propose to *return* to lost Church of England ways, you are rational—but, when you invent a *new* ceremonial which never was, when you copy the Roman or other foreign rituals, you are neither respectable nor rational." Ward's *Life of Newman*, vol. i. pp. 236–7.

[1] *Life*, vol. iv. p. 211.

[2] *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, No. 128. The whole story of the ritualistic movement is well given in the evidence of the present Archbishop of Canterbury before the recent Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline. Cp. *Report*, vol. ii. pp. 340–402.

[3] *Life*, vol. ii. pp. 142–145; letter of 1839 to Rev. J. F. Russell.

ritual is the expression of æsthetic needs in worship. The intimate connection between dogma and ritual is sometimes denied, but the history of the ritualistic movement proves that the desire for ritual was determined by a dogmatic interest. Had there been no sacramental dogma, there would have been far less passion aroused over ritual matters. Other causes, of course, have helped forward the movement. There has been a development of æsthetic appreciation, a wish to make worship more beautiful, a vague, sentimental idealising of a past which loved colour and ceremony, and a desire to imitate the same; but the fundamental motive of the movement has been dogmatic, and is to be traced to Tractarian teaching.

Now, while it is true that there is a real place for beauty in worship, and that truth may be taught, in some degree, by sensuous symbols, it remains a grave question, whether the growth of an elaborate eucharistic ritual has not tended to create in the popular mind a materialistic conception of the sacrament which is alien to the spirit of Christ's teaching. I do not propose to discuss the sacramental teaching of the extreme wing of the Church; though a good case could, I think, be made out for the assertion that not a little of that teaching is materialistic in character. The point for consideration is its general effect upon the uneducated lay mind. Does it make for the growth of a reasonable faith, or does it foster superstition? Does it not so surround the sacrament with mystery as to bewilder the simple worshipper? Its effect, however, upon the more educated layman must not be exaggerated. Tractarian teaching, as even its supporters would admit, has not succeeded in impressing itself, to any large extent, upon the laymen of the Church of England. To the average layman its sacerdotalism is profoundly repugnant. He has no wish to see the ministers of his Church made into a separate caste. Sacerdotalism, high eucharistic doctrine, elaborate ritual, the three cohere together: and the layman can find no warrant for any of them in the teaching of Christ; a teaching marked by a sublime simplicity, and a spirituality for which all questions of ecclesiastical organisation and the externals of worship are of secondary importance.

In summarising the general results of the Oxford Move-

ment we must say, first of all, that it has led to a narrowing of the conception of the Church. This narrowing shows itself in more ways than one. In proportion as the Church is thought of as the main channel through which God's truth reaches man, the conception of the State is secularised, and the demand is made for a complete separation between the two. One of the most creative ideas in the mind of Christ was that of a Kingdom of God upon earth, whose growth was to be marked by the abolition of the antithesis of sacred and secular; in which all activities were to be sacred, because all would be exercised to the glory of God. But this antithesis is now being pressed to an extreme. Again, if in one sense the idea of the Church has been widened by the thought of the Church Catholic superseding the thought of the National Church, in another sense it has been fatally narrowed by the rigid exclusion from the Church of all non-episcopal bodies. The movement has accentuated the already existing divisions of Christendom. Reunion with non-episcopal societies is contemplated, only on the condition that their ministers submit to reordination at episcopal hands. The more tolerant Christianity of the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century, who were ready to admit the Protestants of the continental Churches to communion in the Church of England, has been replaced by a spirit of exclusiveness. The same narrowing of the conception of the Church is seen in the growth of sacerdotalism with its intensified opposition of clerical and lay; an opposition which is in no way softened by the praiseworthy attempt to make the layman realise more fully the meaning of his membership in the Church. Of the confusion and disorder which have resulted from the advance of extreme ritualistic tendencies evidence is abundant; and such disorder cannot exist without detriment to the life of the whole society. There are men who are prepared to wreck the life of a parish by insistence upon a ritual which is distasteful to all but a very small minority of the parishioners. The Church, which was once in reality the Church of the nation, is in danger of becoming a sect. The broad stream of the national life flows on, carving out its independent course. But there is danger lest the stream of the Church's life shall flow in an opposite direction. The result can spell nothing but loss to both

Church and nation. It cannot, indeed, be maintained that the modern High Church movement is, in intention, antagonistic to the national life, as was the original Tractarianism. There you had a deliberate attempt to crush out the new forces which were making themselves felt. The High Churchman of to-day is keen to show his interest in social problems, and is, on the whole, no foe to the growth of new knowledge. And in this fact lies the hopefulness of the situation. For the more ecclesiasticism is tempered with the spirit of historical research, and comes in contact with the wider intellectual tendencies of the age, the more will it be transformed into something broader and more reasonable.

In the matter of theological study the movement revived an interest in patristic theology. It was a movement in favour of learning to this extent, that it made men more acquainted with the writings of the Fathers. Yet even here its interest was mainly in the Latin Fathers. The broader thought of some of the Greek Fathers was less compatible with Tractarian ideals. But credit is due to the Oxford leaders for having, within certain defined limits, put new life into theology, and roused an interest in the development of doctrine. But, while they were the friends of patristic, they were the foes of modern learning. Biblical criticism, physical science, the larger thought of Germany, the intellectual movements which were to mark the main line of progress in the century—to these they were hostile. Even Pusey, the most learned of them all, who as a young man had shown some signs of sympathy with German theology, repented of his early liberalism. I question if the movement can be said to have produced any great theological work, though it called attention to the fact that the Anglican Church had always made the claim to be a Church interested in learning.

The real strength of the movement is to be found in its effect upon Church life. It created a sense of corporate responsibility, made membership in the Church mean something real, and quickened in clergyman and layman alike the feeling of duty and privilege. To it can be traced the revival of synodal action in the Church, the growth of sisterhoods and the official work of women in tending the sick and fallen, and many of the modern activities of the Church which seek to

make religion a living power in human society. It did much to improve worship, showing that religion could utilise colour, form, music in the service of God. It was a definitely religious movement, inspired by lofty, if narrow, ideals, which has exercised an incalculable influence upon the life of the Church.[1]

But when everything in its favour has been said, the fact remains that the essential temper of the movement, and the determinative principles of its theology, are incompatible with the larger intellectual forces which are moulding our present thought. The spirit of historical criticism can come to no terms with authority as the Tractarians conceived it. The results of modern inquiry into the origin of the Church are opposed to the rigid theory of Apostolical Succession, and the opposition will make itself increasingly felt. It is a significant fact how little the movement has influenced our leading minds.[2] None of the greater poets of the nineteenth century yielded themselves to its spell. Tennyson and Browning show no sympathy with Anglo-Catholicism. Tractarian teaching gave no help to Clough or Matthew Arnold in their hour of doubt. While among theologians the prominent names are Hatch, Hort, Westcott, Lightfoot, Maurice, Robertson; and none of these were disciples of the school.[3] Theology to-day is permeated with the historical spirit. It seeks to go back to Christ as the creative source of the Christian development. The more the mind of Christ is studied, the less will Anglo-Catholicism prove compatible with it.

NOTE E

Newman's attempt in Tract 90 to show that the Articles were patient of a Catholic meaning had been made before in the seventeenth century by Dr. Christopher Davenport. Davenport was the son of a Coventry alderman, and was born about 1598. He went to Merton

[1] For an interesting discussion of the general effects of the movement upon Church life, cp. Lectures vi. and vii. of Cruttwell's *Six Lectures on the Oxford Movement.*

[2] Gladstone is an exception.

[3] Fairbairn brings this out in his *Catholicism, Anglican and Roman.*

College, Oxford, in 1613, but appears to have been dismissed because he had not the money formally to enrol himself as a commoner of the college, though he stayed on in Oxford and worked with a private tutor. After a few months he became a Roman Catholic, and went to Douay. In 1617 he joined the Franciscan Order, and was subsequently appointed Professor of Theology at Douay. His main work, however, was done in England, to which he was sent on a missionary enterprise. Here he became one of the most prominent ecclesiastical figures of the day, obtaining a chaplaincy at the court of Charles I, and holding frequent intercourse with Laud and Cosin. To bring about the reunion of Christendom was his burning desire; and with this end in view he wrote the book which forms the subject of this note. His adopted name in the Roman Catholic Church was Sancta Clara.

The book, which appeared in 1634, has the following title :—*Deus, Natura, Gratia, sive Tractatus de Praedestinatione, de Meritis, et peccatorum remissione, seu de Justificatione, et denique de Sanctorum Invocatione.*[1] To the main treatise is added a *Paraphrastica Expositio reliquorum Articulorum Confessionis Anglicanae*, the purport of which is thus described :—"Articuli Confessionis Anglicanae paraphrastica exponuntur, et in quantum cum veritate compossibiles reddi possunt, perlustrantur." The *Expositio* was reprinted and translated in 1865 by the Rev. F. G. Lee, who includes in his volume the Expositions and Comments from the Theological Problems of the original treatise.[2]

Sancta Clara's attempt to square the teaching of the Articles with the doctrines of the Roman Church is ingenious rather than convincing. Common sense rebels against the subtle and overstrained interpretations to which he is obliged to have recourse. The following examples may serve to illustrate his method :

(1) Article XV, *Of Christ alone without sin*, asserts that "all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things." Sancta Clara has to reconcile this statement with the Roman belief in the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary. He tries to do so by three arguments. First, the Latin form of the Article speaks of "nos reliqui"; and this should be translated "we the rest," not "all we the rest." The phrase, he says, was meant to exclude the Virgin from "the common dregs of sin." Secondly, if the Article had intended to include her, it would have made some exceptions in her

[1] Per Fr. Franciscum à Sancta Clara. The printer was Anthony Chard of Lyons.

[2] The treatise is divided into thirty-seven *Problemata*.

honour. Thirdly, we have no evidence that the Virgin was ever baptized, but the Article is speaking of baptized persons.

(2) Article XIX, *Of the Church*, states that "as the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." Sancta Clara's comment is, that the Article is not speaking of the Church Universal, but of Rome as a particular Church distinct from other particular Churches. To say that Rome so regarded has erred is contrary to the truth, but it is not contrary to the faith, for faith means by Rome the Church Universal, and that cannot err.

(3) Article XXX, *Of both kinds*, says, "the Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people." Sancta Clara, while prepared to allow, for the sake of argument, that John vi. implies that communion in both species was ordered by Christ, denies that the Article makes such communion a necessary condition of salvation. Even if Christ did command that communion should be in both kinds, there is nothing inconsistent in saying that "on account of circumstances, for instance, of persons, place, or time, Holy Communion should be administered under one kind, nor is the present custom of the Church more than this."

(4) The condemnation of the doctrine of Purgatory in Article XXII, and of the sacrifices of Masses in Article XXXI, Sancta Clara explains as having reference to the popular opinions about such doctrines held by the opponents of Rome, not to the doctrines themselves when rightly interpreted. The sacrifice of the Mass is not primarily propitiatory, but it is so secondarily "by the application of the bloody sacrifice, and by commemoration of it." The death on the altar derives its virtue from the death on the Cross. "It is therefore a Sacrifice, but with that restrictive term used by the Fathers—*i.e.* an unbloody sacrifice."

Newman, it will be remembered, drew the same distinction between Roman doctrine proper and the popular conception of Roman doctrine. But, unlike Sancta Clara, he did not say that, if anyone would understand the popular conception which the Articles condemned, he must go to the enemies of Rome. He was prepared to admit that "the actual popular beliefs and usages sanctioned by Rome in the countries in communion with it, over and above the dogmas," were "dominant errors."[1] Newman must have known of Sancta Clara's book, but I am not sufficiently acquainted

[1] *Apologia*, p. 78 (ed. 1890).

with his writings to be able to produce evidence that he had read it.

I may add that Sancta Clara's volume was somewhat coldly received by the authorities of the Roman Church, who considered that, in his desire for reunion, he had taken too favourable a view of Anglican orthodoxy.

CHAPTER XV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

Mr. Wilfrid Ward, in the volume which gives an account of his father's connection with the Oxford Movement,[1] complains, and perhaps justly, that critics and historians of that movement have for the most part neglected to give due weight to its philosophical side. Purely ecclesiastical questions have filled their field of vision, to the exclusion of those more fundamental problems connected with the nature of religious belief, with which Newman and Ward specially concerned themselves. To show that the movement had an important philosophical character, and made a valuable contribution to the psychology of belief, is one of the objects of Mr. Wilfrid Ward's book.

I propose in this chapter to attempt some examination of the religious philosophy of Newman and Ward, as we have it in the *Grammar of Assent* and the *Ideal of a Christian Church*. In knowledge of philosophy and in philosophical capacity the two men stand on very different levels. Newman does not deserve, nor would he have claimed, the title of philosopher; Ward does deserve it, as the witness of his fellow members in the Metaphysical Society abundantly proves. Martineau, for example, speaks of "his singular metaphysical acuteness,"[2] and Hutton says of him—"His metaphysics were as sharp cut as crystals. He never seemed to see the half lights of a question at all. There was no penumbra in his mind, or, at least, what he could not grasp clearly he treated as if he could not apprehend at all."[3] Ward, in a word, unlike Newman, was capable of arguing, and did argue, in a purely philosophical spirit. It was as a genuine philosopher that he attacked in the *Dublin Review* the system of J. S. Mill; and to the ability with which the attack was conducted Mill himself testified, for he writes:—

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[1] *William George Ward and the Oxford Movement*, 1889.

[2] *William George Ward and the Catholic Revival*, 1893, p. 312. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

"I believe that in answering I am answering the best that is likely to be said by any future champion."[1] The Ward of the *Ideal*, however, as we shall see, does not write as a pure philosopher. In that volume he approaches far more nearly the standpoint of Newman.

Now, the object of Newman and Ward must be kept carefully in mind. They were not attempting to offer a complete philosophical defence of religion, nor were they writing primarily for the learned. Though neither the *Grammar of Assent* nor the *Ideal* can be called popular books, still their authors had a popular aim in view.[2] They sought to find some ground for religious belief which should appeal to the ordinary man, and in particular to establish a basis for faith which should be permanent, and independent of the changing fashions of apologetic. It must not, however, be imagined that because the two men shared in this common aim they were in agreement as to what may be called the official policy of Roman apologetic. Newman was prepared to go far further than Ward in the direction of modifying the traditional methods. He had, as Mr. Wilfrid Ward clearly shows in his recently published *Life of Newman*, a keen appreciation of sceptical difficulties, and a large measure of sympathy with the liberal tendencies of such men as Döllinger and Acton; and he saw plainly enough that the intellectual needs of the time called for an apologetic very different from that then in vogue among Roman theologians. It was his liberalism in this matter which brought him into disfavour with the ecclesiastical authorities, and clouded his life for many years. Ward was not prepared to follow Newman into these new fields. He was a stout opponent of the liberal movement in the Church. But he welcomed the

[1] Said of an article by Ward in the *British Critic*, in which empiricism is criticised, and a defence is offered of intuitional morality and necessary truth. Quoted from p. 273 of *W. G. Ward and the Oxford Movement* (2nd edition).

[2] The *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* was not published till 1870, when Newman had been a Roman for twenty-five years. In the matter of Newman's religious philosophy, no sharp division need be made between his Anglican and Roman periods. The *Grammar of Assent* is but a development of a line of thought which had long been present to his mind, as the *Oxford University Sermons* prove. Compare a letter from Newman to Aubrey de Vere, August 1870:—"As to my Essay on Assent, it is on a subject which has teased me for these twenty or thirty years." The letter is given in W. Ward's *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, vol. ii. p. 245.

Grammar of Assent, because he found in it the very kind of apologetic which he was himself seeking to establish. It was an apologetic concerned with the fundamental basis of Christian belief. Its arguments went far deeper down than those current in the ordinary text-books and manuals. It presented a case for religion and Christianity which, while it reposed on a philosophical basis, was so set forth that the ordinary man who was inclined to religion could find in it sound and satisfying reasons for his own faith. Ward and Newman, then, were agreed in searching for some deep, yet simple, defence of the essential principle of religion, and were interested in investigating the psychology of belief.

Their main motive was religious, to build up the faith ot the simple believer; and hence their work was not a work of disinterested philosophical inquiry. As Wilfrid Ward puts it—"the Liberals were treating of the science of evidence, the Oxford School of the art of religious knowledge."[1] But even this description of the purpose of the two writers needs further qualification. Their inquiry into the psychology of belief was not unbiassed; but was dominated throughout by the assumption that the only sure ground for faith was reliance upon the authority of the Roman Church. "The office then of the Church in giving light to see the truth, and guidance in moral action, is the final development of the philosophy of the Oxford teachers."[2] But the final development was also the initial presupposition. Much of Ward's work may be described as an analysis of the spiritual temper of the pious Catholic, and a vindication of the value of the devotional system of Rome in promoting faith. Newman was concerned more with showing that faith moved in a circle of its own, independent of and requiring no help from reason. Neither of them, however, pursued a free and unfettered investigation of truth, such as alone deserves to be called philosophical.

Now the key to the whole Tractarian movement is its leaders' distrust of the spirit of the age. In no one was this distrust more alive than in Newman himself; and because he so distrusted it, and could see in it nothing but the working of forces hostile to religion, he sought to find a basis for faith

[1] *W. G. Ward and the Oxford Movement*, vol. i. p. 392.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 400.

which no advance of criticism or liberalism could undermine.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, that we find him taking refuge in authority, and setting up faith in opposition to reason. The whole movement, indeed, was avowedly reactionary. Wilfrid Ward, rebutting Froude's charge that a spread of scepticism was the result of Tractarianism, claims that Newman anticipated, and so was able to guard against, the onset of Biblical criticism, and the disintegrating effects of empiricism. Using Coleridge and Butler as his teachers, he fashioned, we are told, an apologetic, philosophical in character, yet of immediate practical service for the religious life of the ordinary man, and thus proved himself the saviour of Christianity for his generation. Whether this was so we have now to inquire.

Newman's sermons preached before the University of Oxford on the relation of faith to reason first introduce us to his views upon the nature of belief. The position defended there, as again later in the *Grammar of Assent*, is that faith is so far independent of reason, that in any particular case it need not follow as the result of a previous rational inquiry. "Faith, viewed as an intellectual habit or act, does not depend upon inquiry and examination, but has its own special basis, whatever that is, as truly as Conscience has."[2] By a rational faith we mean one which accords with right reason in the abstract, not necessarily one which in the particular instance has resulted from the use of reasoning. Faith, again, does not require such strong evidence as belief based on reason, "because it is mainly swayed by antecedent considerations," such as hopes, fears, wishes, the general outlook and temper of a man's life; in a word, by all the subtle and indefinable influences which play upon the living personality.[3] "Thus Faith is the reasoning of a religious mind, or of what Scripture calls a right or renewed heart, which acts upon presumptions, rather than evidence,

[1] The age, he writes in Tract 85, "denies the existence of the Church as a divine institution; it denies that Christianity has been cast into any particular social mould . . . it is rapidly tending to deny the existence of any *system* of Christianity, either any creed, doctrine, philosophy, or by whatever other name we designate it. . . . The view henceforth is to be that Christianity does not exist in documents, any more than in institutions; in other words, the Bible will be given up as well as the Church."

[2] *Oxford University Sermons.* Edition 1906. Sermon x. p. 184.

[3] *Ibid.*, x. p. 187.

which speculates and ventures on the future, when it cannot make sure of it." [1]

A later sermon expounds the important difference between Implicit and Explicit reason. Faith needs both grounds and an object, but it does not follow that all believers should be able to state what those grounds and that object are.[2] "All men have a reason, but not all men can give a reason." There is the original process of reasoning, and there is the process of investigating our reasoning, and the two are entirely distinct. The former may be called Implicit, the latter Explicit reason. Subsequent analysis of a process of reasoning adds nothing to the completeness or rationality of the process. It is all important, urges Newman, to remember this distinction; for "no analysis is subtle and delicate enough to represent adequately the state of mind, under which we believe, or the subjects of belief, as they are presented to our thoughts." [3] Verbal arguments are usually merely symbolic of the real and hidden grounds which in moral and religious matters determine belief." [4]

Finally, faith is a moral principle. Its exercise depends upon temperament, character, volition. The presence of the will to believe is necessary to a right use of faith; a point upon which Ward also insists in the *Ideal*, when he emphasizes the necessity of obedience as a condition of personal salvation, and of the appropriation of revealed truth. A man must do the doctrine if he would know it to be true.

Newman's contention, then, is twofold. First, the vital and determining grounds of belief are personal. They lie too deep down for logical exposition. They involve the whole nature, and can never be adequately translated into terms of the intellect. The believer himself is not always fully conscious of the premises from which he draws his conclusions, nor can he cast his reasoning into strictly logical form. Yet he judges

[1] *Oxford University Sermons*, xi. p. 203. Cp. also the following passage in Sermon xii. p. 249: "Such, then, under all circumstances, is real Faith; a presumption, yet not a mere chance conjecture,—a reaching forward, yet not of excitement or of passion,—a moving forward in the twilight, yet not without clue or direction,—a movement from something known to something unknown, but kept in the narrow path of truth by the Law of dutifulness, which inhabits it, the Light of Heaven, which animates and guides it."

[2] *Ibid.*, xiii. p. 254. [3] *Ibid.*, xiii. p. 267. [4] *Ibid.*, xiii. p. 275.

his conclusions to be sound, and is justified in so doing. To this process of hidden inference and subsequent assent Newman in the *Grammar of Assent* gives the name of the Illative Sense. His second contention is that the spiritual eye can alone see spiritual things. "The religious mind sees much which is invisible to the irreligious mind. They have not the same evidence before them."[1] The sceptic may be perfectly honest in the conclusion which he draws; but the prior question arises, whether his inability to see in the facts the deeper significance which the believer sees in them may not be due to his failure in the past to train his moral and religious sense. No man in such a case can lightly pass judgment upon him. This, however, is certain, and it is this which Newman is emphasizing, that both believer and unbeliever form their differing opinions under the hidden influence of antecedent convictions. The personal equation counts for much in all religious inquiry.

The *Grammar of Assent* develops further Newman's psychology of belief. The essay analyses minutely the nature of assent and the laws of its growth, but its main purpose is to show how we may reach unconditional assent, or mental certitude. Rejecting altogether Locke's notion that assent admits of degrees, Newman maintains that assent is always unconditional. Even in the case of an opinion there is unconditional assent to the uncertainty of the opinion. The human mind cannot rest in probabilities; it must have certitude, of which the formula is "I know that I know." In other words, there must be, along with the truth perceived, the perception that it is a truth.[2] But can we reach certitude in the high matters of religious faith which are Newman's chief concern? His answer is, that we do reach it. Men are certain, and you must take human nature as you find it. Certitude has definite characteristics which help us to recognise its presence. It is accompanied by a specific "feeling of satisfaction and self-gratulation, of intellectual security arising out of a sense of success, attainment, possession, finality, as regards the matter which has been in question."[3] And if you are thus

[1] From a letter of Newman to W. G. Ward. Cp. Ward's *Life of Newman*, vol. ii. p. 247.

[2] *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (sixth edition), p. 197.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

certain, then, by "the spontaneous action of the intellect" you instantly reject all suggestions that what you believe is not true.[1]

Now, doubtless, it is a fact that men do thus feel absolutely sure; but have we here anything more than a confident assertion on the part of the individual that he has certain inward feelings? Is his certainty of any value to me in my independent search for truth? May not lapse of time and change of circumstances modify this feeling of assurance? Newman frankly faces these difficulties. He allows that past certitudes may in the future cease to be such, and confesses that "certitude does not admit of an interior, immediate test, sufficient to discriminate it from false certitude."[2] He is obliged therefore to fall back on the test of permanence. "Certitude ought to stand all trials, or it is not certitude";[3] and if in course of time a man loses a conviction which once he possessed, that is sure proof that he never really had reached the state of "indefectible" certitude. But once more, we must ask how, if past convictions have vanished, we can be certain that present convictions will endure. To that question Newman can give no satisfactory answer. An answer, indeed, he does give, when he appeals to the authority of the Church as guaranteeing the truth of religious beliefs, but that appeal is philosophically untenable. It is the refuge only of those who have abandoned all trust in human reason, and are at heart philosophical sceptics.

Three presuppositions underlie Newman's psychology of belief, and I think it may be said that Ward also shared them. The first is, that conscience affords plain and direct evidence of the moral personality of God. Newman's debt to Bishop Butler was, as he himself admits, great. He tells us in the *Apologia* that he derived from the thought of an analogy between the various parts of God's creation, "the conclusion that the system which is of less importance is economically or sacramentally connected with the more momentous system";[4] and that Butler's doctrine "Probability is the guide of life," led him to investigate the problem of

[1] *Grammar of Assent* (sixth edition), pp. 197, 198.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 255.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 256.
[4] Edition 1890, pp. 10, 11.

the logical cogency of faith. Butler was also his teacher upon the nature and function of conscience in human life. "Even philosophers, who have been antagonists on other points, agree in recognising the inward voice of that solemn Monitor, personal, peremptory, unargumentative, irresponsible, minatory, definitive."[1] Are not these words living echoes of Butler's grave speech? Again, in the *Apologia*, he writes that there had never been any doubt in his mind about God's existence, and that God lived in his conscience as "a Personal, All-seeing, All-judging Being."[2]

The second presupposition is, that we may trust that God will not deceive us in our search for truth, and that our search will not be fruitless. God made our minds, and made them for attaining truth. Somewhere, therefore, truth is to be found, and certainty reached. The fact that men possess this feeling of certainty in matters of religion is a practical proof that the search for truth is not in vain.

The third presupposition is, that "the initial truths of divine knowledge ought to be viewed as parallel to the initial truths of secular; as the latter are certain, so too are the former."[3] "This," he writes, "is the true parallel between human and divine knowledge; each of them opens into a large field of mere opinion, but in both the one and the other the primary principles, the general, fundamental, cardinal truths are immutable."[4]

The point which has to be determined is the range of divine truth, which Newman calls immutable. This is very extensive, as the following passage shows:

"And so, as regards the world invisible and future, we have a direct and conscious knowledge of our Maker, His attributes, His providences, acts, works, and will from nature and revelation; and beyond this knowledge lies the large domain of theology, metaphysics, and ethics, on which it is not allowed to us to advance beyond probabilities, or to attain to more than an opinion."[5]

A sufficiently puzzling statement, surely! Theology, metaphysics, and ethics admit only of opinion and uncertain

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 123.
[2] Page 198.
[3] *Grammar of Assent*, p. 237.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240.

conclusions; yet we have certainty in our knowledge of the being, character, will, providences, and acts of God. Are not these the subject-matter of theology, and in part of metaphysics? Or does Newman mean that our knowledge of God comes to us through the action of implicit reason, but that, when we try to formulate it and render it explicit, we find that we cannot logically justify our beliefs? The truth is that Newman was at heart a thorough-going sceptic in this sense, that he utterly distrusted human reason. He fell back therefore upon two supports, his own deep-seated moral and religious instincts, and the guidance of the external authority of the Church. He cut human nature into two. Conscience was the voice of God, but reason was not. Conscience led to truth; intelligence, if not guided by authority, could only issue in scepticism. The same distrust of human reason appears in Ward's *Ideal*. Both writers are individualists, and fail to grasp the significance of the thought of a common or universal reason, operating in all men, and progressively leading them on into truth.

It is essential for an understanding of Newman that we should analyse more in detail his general intellectual temper and habits. The Oxford Movement, as we have seen, was, in the main, an appeal to the principle of authority. But in opposition to that movement was the development of a line of thought, represented by the succession of Coleridge, Julius Hare, Maurice, which sought to justify religion by an appeal to the spiritual instincts of humanity, and gave to reason a larger meaning than Newman gave it. With this other movement Newman was so far in agreement, that he attached immense importance to the witness of these fundamental spiritual instincts. God spoke in conscience in unmistakable language. The human heart yearned for God; its spiritual stirrings and aspirations were evidence of the presence of the divine. He could never doubt that in God "we live, and move, and have our being." But there he stopped. He could not trust human reason to construct a rational theology out of this material. Reason was a blind guide: those who followed her must inevitably fall into the ditch of atheism. He misunderstood the nature of reason. Such philosophy as he had was of the empirical order, and for

empiricism reason is a mere logical instrument, and works from an individualist basis. The distinction between reason and reasoning he had never grasped. Reason stands for the movement of our whole personality controlled by its highest faculties. Reasoning may be, and for Newman was, a logic-chopping instrument, dealing with abstractions and unrealities. It is curious that one who was so profoundly convinced that God moved in man's moral nature should have been unable to allow that He moved also in human intelligence, which is one of the highest parts of that nature. The result was that, when he wished to justify his belief in the theological dogmas of his Church, he had to fall back upon the principle of authority. Theology is the reflective analysis of the contents of religious experience. It is the work of reason. But if you start by distrusting reason, how can you reach any satisfactory theological dogmas? For Newman theology was only symbolical. Its dogmas, being the construction of human reason, were untrustworthy. They became credible only if some authority guaranteed them. Now the Roman Church was such an authority, and Newman seems to have accepted it as such for two reasons. First, the Church was an existing fact. Here was no case of abstractions and empty logical concepts. Here was a tangible reality, making a direct appeal to his nature. He was on sure ground here. Secondly, his nature craved for religious certainty. Somewhere, he felt, there must exist a means of escape from doubt. It was God's intention that man should discover truth. Would not that intention be frustrated if no Church anywhere could be found which, having once received the divine revelation, could preserve it intact, and expound its meaning? The only Church which offered what he wanted was the Church of Rome, and to its authority he bowed. His distrust of reason led him to make this submission. Having made it, he submitted so absolutely that he left reason little else to do than to register the decrees of the supreme authority.

It must be noted that Newman assumes the fact of revelation, and accepts without question the belief that the contents of the revelation, at least in their main outlines, have been faithfully preserved. In an important passage in the *Grammar of Assent* he thus speaks of Christianity:

"It is a 'Revelatio revelata'; it is a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by His chosen instruments, and to be received as such a message; and therefore to be positively acknowledged, embraced, and maintained as true, on the ground of its being divine, not as true on intrinsic grounds, not as probably true, or partially true, but as absolutely certain knowledge, certain in a sense in which nothing else can be certain, because it comes from Him who neither can deceive nor be deceived." [1]

But, if Christianity is not to be accepted as true on "intrinsic grounds," it can only mean that we are to accept it at the bidding of some external authority. Truth, however, cannot thus be imposed upon the mind from without. Reason must first satisfy itself that the dictating authority is one which men can trust, and that what it dictates is reasonable. Intellectually a sceptic, Newman was yet firmly convinced that man knew God through conscience and revelation. This intense conviction had for him three results. It led him to disparage reason in the quest for truth; truth could be reached by other methods, by the movement of the spiritual instincts of the personality. It led him to confuse logic with psychology, and to substitute an account of the psychological growth of belief in the individual mind for an inquiry into the tests by which we may judge a belief to be true or false. And it predisposed him to pass out of the stage of belief into that of credulity, and to accept as true what a more balanced mind would unhesitatingly reject as false. The safeguard against superstition which he lays down in one of his University sermons is totally inadequate. "The safeguard of faith is a right state of heart." [2] One could wish that he had said "a right state of mind." Pious feelings, the moral convictions of conscience, and a will resolutely set on righteousness, are no sound substitute for the work of reason in distinguishing the true from the false. Nor can the affirmations of the basal instincts of the personality decide whether a miracle happened, whether the conclusions of the higher criticism are sound, or whether the Roman claim

[1] P. 387.

[2] Sermon xii., p. 234. Sermon xv., "The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine," the last University sermon which he ever preached, provides ample illustration of his tendency to credulity and superstition.

to infallibility is justified.[1] It is a test of truth which is needed. It is that for which Newman himself was searching when he wrote the *Grammar of Assent*, but which he so signally fails to provide.

As a psychological study of belief, and of its formation in the mind of the individual, the *Grammar of Assent* will long hold an important position. It is a masterpiece of analysis and insight into the workings of the human mind. It shows how complex are the forces which influence us in the shaping of our convictions, and how cautious we should be in setting forth the grounds of any belief which we may hold. But it remains a psychological treatise from first to last, and it is constructed on an individualistic basis. The only logical conclusion to which the argument of the book leads is, that that is true which the individual chooses to believe is true and holds with conviction, provided that lapse of time and altered knowledge do not bring about, as Newman admits is often the case, the reversal of our most cherished convictions. Real truth, as Newman saw, must be immutable. What is once true must be always true. The difficulty for each man is to be assured that he has reached immutable truth, and of that Newman can offer no satisfactory guarantee. In his uncertainty the doubter is bidden fall back upon the external authority of the Church. Newman tries to rest his case upon the tendency of the human mind to form certainties out of probabilities; yet all the while he is conscious, that the only certainty which can be reached in this way is the certainty of a subjective assurance, which an altered experience may at any minute overthrow. Beliefs which we can hold with certainty must rest upon some other foundation than that of subjective feeling. For a test of truth Newman substitutes an account of the psychological growth of belief. He cannot bring himself to trust the universal reason of the race, which gives us a sure ground of confidence as regards a large range of beliefs. And he fails to see that, though we may crave for certainty in religious beliefs, we can never attain to more than probability, though it may be probability of a high order. Finally, he will not allow to reason its inherent right of criti-

[1] Cp. an article "Cardinal Newman" in *Edinburgh Review*, April 1912.

cising and testing the beliefs which faith, in virtue of its own activities, accepts as luminously certain.

If, now, we are not prepared to acquiesce in Newman's doctrine of individual assurance backed by Church authority, what other test of truth can we propose? There are various tests of truth, just as there are various grades of knowledge. In some fields of inquiry, in the sciences of number and geometry, for example, we can have absolute demonstration of truth, for these mathematical truths are self-evident. In other cases we cannot question the truth of the assumptions upon which we proceed, for without them we can make no advance at all. I must assume, for instance, that the laws of thought are valid, for I cannot think, without at every turn making use of them. With regard to other beliefs, we trust the accumulated experience of the race. There is a general mind in which we share. Most of our beliefs have not been consciously thought out by us; they have grown up in us through the influence of our social surroundings. We accept them, because we trust the common intelligence, and because nothing has ever occurred in our experience to overthrow them. But we are prepared to admit that a changed experience would lead to a modification of them. That we cannot now conceive the opposite of a belief is no proof that we may not one day conceive it, except in those cases where the belief is a postulate of knowledge. And then the inconceivability of the opposite is hardly a test of truth. It is the truth. The belief is its own evidence; it is not being tested by any criterion outside itself. In the case, then, of many of our most ultimate beliefs we have no need to apply Newman's test of the feeling of indefectible certitude, for the beliefs belong to the essential structure of our intelligence. In the case of other beliefs, where we are not dealing with the postulates of reason or self-evident truths, we have to be content with probability, though such probability is often of a very high order. Newman would fain reach certainty where it cannot be found. The movement of faith from probability to assurance can generate nothing but a subjective certainty. Religion may require that this shall be present, if the individual is to live the life of trust and obedience; but there can be no secret chambers of belief into which reason is forbidden to enter. And when reason

with its critical activity invades the chamber of faith it will demand other evidence for the truth of a belief than a mere feeling of personal assurance can give. It will ask that at least the attempt shall be made to render implicit reason explicit.[1]

Newman's distrust of reason shows itself again in his treatment of dogma, about which he writes in the *Apologia*. "From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery." [2]

Now dogma is faith translated into terms of reflection, and formulated in the language of reason. Dogma is absolutely necessary to religion. Religion looks outward to an object of worship and trust, and human intelligence must seek to interpret that object, and its own relationship to it. Newman therefore is right in insisting upon the necessity of dogma in religion. But when we look more closely into his treatment of the dogmatic principle we find that his vindication of dogma is not a vindication of the intellect. Implicit reason, he has urged, is always greater than explicit. Faith has hidden grounds of belief which never rise into the full light of consciousness. We may grant this, and yet quarrel with the conclusion which he draws from the fact. The following passage occurs in one of his sermons:[3]

"Now, here I observe, first of all, that, naturally as the inward idea of divine truth, such as has been described, passes into explicit form by the activity of our reflective powers, still such an actual delineation is not essential to its genuineness and perfection. A peasant may have such a true impression, yet be unable to give any intelligible account of it as will easily be understood."

Now reflection may not be necessary to the genuineness of faith, but can it be maintained that it is not necessary to its perfection? Is not the most perfect form of faith that which appeals to the whole man, that which reason can intelligibly

[1] The argument of the *Grammar of Assent* is thoughtfully criticised in S. H. Mellone's *Leaders of Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, ch. iii.

[2] P. 49.

[3] *Oxford University Sermons*, xv. pp. 320, 321.

expound and justify? Religion is not theology, but theology is needed to bring into consciousness the fundamental principle of religion. It is a dangerous doctrine to maintain that the perfection of religion is independent of its intellectual formulation. It opens the gate for the admission of subjective feeling as a test of religious truth. Why is it that Newman, who was so anxious to insist upon the necessity of dogma, should argue that faith can be perfect without reflective analysis of its contents? The explanation of the contradiction is to be found in his conviction that, apart from revelation, ultimate truth is beyond our reach. Important though dogma was, it was still for him only a symbol of faith. "All that we know, strictly speaking, is the existence of the impressions our senses make on us; and yet we scruple not to speak as if they conveyed to us the knowledge of material substances. Let, then, the Catholic dogmas, as such, be freely admitted to convey no true idea of Almighty God, but only an earthly one, gained from earthly figure, provided it be allowed, on the other hand, that the senses do not convey to us any true idea of matter, but only an idea commensurate with sensible impressions."[1] Newman's distrust of reason is an outcome of his sensationalism. But over against it stands his profound belief in revelation. And because he so believed in revelation, he never realised the need of a philosophy which should link man and God together by the tie of a common reason working in both. But unless this step is taken there can be no hope of understanding either man or the world in which he lives. To depreciate reason in order that faith may be exalted is to tread the road which leads to scepticism. It is of course true that our conceptions of God are very imperfect, yet they may correspond with the reality as far as they go. Incomplete knowledge may yet be real knowledge. On Newman's view we cannot really know God at all, but only the symbols which we fashion to represent Him. But if this is so, how, it must be asked, can we be aware that they are symbols? To call knowledge symbolic implies a possession of real knowledge, with which the symbolic knowledge is compared. If all our knowledge of God is symbolic only, how can we even assert that He exists? Newman would answer that conscience guarantees His existence and moral character. But if conscience

[1] *Oxford University Sermons*, xv. pp. 339–340.

tells of God, why deny to reason, which equally with conscience is God's creation, the right to know God? There must ever remain an unbridged gulf between man and God, unless you are prepared to allow that the knowledge of God is from the first implicit in human consciousness, and that growth in knowledge of Him is the gradual unfolding of what that elementary consciousness contains.[1]

We have seen that the only certainty to which Newman is logically entitled is the certainty of subjective assurance, which is liable to reversal, and provides no test of truth. It follows that there can be no finality in the formulation of dogma. The intellectual expression of a belief cannot have a certainty greater than the grounds upon which the belief was based. If the materials out of which assent arises are only probabilities, the dogmatic rendering of the belief must belong to the same order of probability. My personal feeling of assurance cannot be transferred to the independent realm of truth. The dogmatic expression of faith can never be absolutely final. Dogma can never represent more than the intellectual level reached by the intelligence which formulated and now accepts it. It must always be open to revision and reinterpretation. Each age must remake its dogmas, or at least must be ready to do so. Dogma, then, can never have the certainty which Newman demands for it. His appeal to the authority of the Church as guaranteeing dogma is hopelessly illogical. Whatever authority the Church possesses springs from the common intelligence of its members. The traditional dogmas of theology have an authority, in so far as they represent the common mind of the Christian community past and present. But they are not above criticism, and the authoritative expression of them adds nothing to their reasonableness or truth.

"His certainties are on the surface, and his insecurities below." This is Martineau's criticism of Newman.[2] If it is a true criticism, it implies that even the surface certainties were really uncertainties; for can you build a sound superstructure upon an unsound foundation? I should prefer rather to say

[1] This is well brought out, in special relation to Newman's position, in Professor Watson's *The Philosophical Basis of Religion*, Lecture I.

[2] Cp. "Personal Influences on Present Theology," in *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, vol. i. p. 234.

that Newman possessed certain fundamental securities, but they were purely personal. Mixed with them were other fundamental insecurities, which prevented him from ever passing beyond the narrow threshold of personal belief into a wider philosophy of faith. His securities were his belief in the deep spiritual instincts of his own nature with their witness to God, and his profound conviction that God had met by revelation the religious needs of humanity. His insecurities were his empiricism, and his distrust of reason. The opposition between the two was never overcome, and the result is a character full of the strangest contradictions. He believes in the necessity of dogma, yet can reach only a symbolical theology. He is sure that conscience reveals God, and is equally sure that reason does not. He craves for certainty, but can find it only by taking refuge in external authority. Perpetually haunted by sceptical misgivings, yet convinced that truth is somewhere to be found, he flings himself into the arms of the only Church which dares to claim infallibility. He bows before authority; yet attacks the traditional Roman apologetic, and sows the seeds of a movement which, if it wins the day, must result in the overthrow of a large part of Catholic dogma.[1] The root of all his difficulties is his distrust of reason. There was for him no alternative between Catholicism and atheism, because he had no confidence in that universal intelligence which works in and through the common mind of humanity. "Newman, with all that he stands for, represents the struggle of English empiricism to remain empirical, and yet become imaginative and religious."[2]

In criticising Newman one is, to a considerable extent, criticising Ward, whose philosophy of religion is in principle identical with that of the former. Any special contribution which Ward made to the philosophy of the movement lay, as his son points out,[3] in the direction of clearer exposition and more systematic development of the thoughts common to both. Thus he expanded Newman's doctrine of conscience by emphasizing its unique character, and pointing out that, if it was not to be confused with the intellect, neither was it to be confused with emotion. It was a special faculty, or rather special activity, of

[1] Cp. ch. xvi. of this volume.

[2] Fairbairn's *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, p. 304.

[3] In *W. G. Ward and the Oxford Movement*.

the whole moral personality, giving a special knowledge of God. Again, Ward developed the thought of the Church as a trainer of souls, insisting that only under its discipline and direction could faith and obedience ripen to maturity. Once more, he laid stress upon the value which attaches to the spiritual experience of the saints as evidence for the truth of Christianity. We trust the expert in other fields; should we not, he asks, trust him here? But between Ward and Newman there was a difference. Ward, as a philosopher, trusted reason more than Newman did. Starting from the same intuitional basis, he was interested in working out a constructive theistic philosophy. But the curious thing is that, while Newman was in favour of a new apologetic which should frankly recognise the claims of modern learning and research, Ward held back. His position seems to have been this. There is room for reason while you are at work upon the foundations of religion; there is no room for her when it becomes a question of ecclesiastical dogma. In that region authority and tradition must hold undisputed sway. Newman was not allowed by Rome to pursue his project of a revised apologetic. But it is interesting to note, that the man who most distrusted reason saw clearly the need for a reformation and reinterpretation of traditional dogma; while the man who possessed the necessary philosophical training was unable to see that the reason which he trusted in his defence of theism ought to be trusted still further.

CHAPTER XVI

NEWMAN'S THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT

NEWMAN tells us in the *Apologia* that at the end of 1844 he decided to write an essay on doctrinal development, in order to clear up the doubts and uncertainties in his own mind. If, at the conclusion of his task, his conviction in favour of the Roman Church was no weaker, he intended to secede from Anglicanism. The essay was finished toward the end of 1845. In October of that year Newman was received into the Roman communion. From one point of view, then, the *Development of Christian Doctrine* may be regarded as an apology for his abandonment of Anglicanism, and as a criticism of the Tractarian position, on the ground that, having moved a certain distance in the direction of a more Catholic and less Protestant theology, the Oxford leaders ought logically to advance further and submit to Rome. But the main object of the essay is to meet the charge brought by Protestants, that modern Roman doctrine was an innovation on the teaching of the primitive Church. Rome possessed continuity; she was linked by unbroken ties with the Church of early days. Could her teaching, however, be regarded as primitive? Had she not added on to the original deposit of the faith a body of doctrine for which there was no scriptural or apostolic warrant? To meet this difficulty, not a new one in the history of Roman apologetic, Newman propounded his theory of doctrinal development. The essay, however, possesses an interest far greater than that which belongs to it as connected with the personal history of its author. It was the first attempt in England to apply formally to theology the idea of development. That idea had been gaining ground in Germany since the days of Leibnitz. It underlay the growth of the historical method, and was the leading conception in the thought of Hegel. Moehler in his *Symbolism* (1832), a book strongly coloured by the

influence of Schelling and Hegel, had made use of the conception in discussing the progress of Roman doctrine, and had distinguished between formal and substantial change, allowing only the former in the history of the doctrinal developments of Rome. But, as will be seen, his view of development was very different from Newman's, and his treatment of the idea cannot compare in suggestiveness with that of the latter.

Indeed, the originality of Newman's work is surprising. He wrote, we must remember, fifteen years before the *Origin of Species* was published, when the thought of evolution had taken no hold upon the general mind of England, and biological science was still in its infancy. Yet the book is full of biological colour, and analyses with great insight the conception of growth. We can see, as we look back upon it, how Newman raised by anticipation many of the problems which are so prominent in discussion at the present time, such as the debt of Christianity to the varying environments in which it found itself, or the relation between the Christology of the creeds and of the Gospels. Once more, the essay is of living interest to-day in view of the rise of what is called Modernism, both within and outside the Roman Church. The Modernist aim is to effect a reconciliation between the results of modern knowledge and criticism and the essentials of the faith: it is a problem, in other words, of development. And though Newman was not a Modernist in ideal or temper, still the essay throws considerable light upon the needs of a twentieth century apologetic.

Now the theory which the essay propounds is, as Newman himself admits, "an hypothesis to account for a difficulty."[1] He allows, that is, the force of the Protestant criticism that Rome had innovated in doctrine. He abandons the older Roman view that the whole body of the Church's doctrine was revealed in its entirety from the very first, implicitly if not explicitly. Nor will he accept the theory of a *disciplina arcani*, that is, of the temporary concealment from the public by the authorities of the Church of a portion of the truth initially revealed,[2] but maintains that there was a real doctrinal development, the gradual emergence of new truth not

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 30, edit. 1906.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

known before to be such. And he sets himself to show how the new truth, different though it appears from the old, is yet a natural outgrowth of the primitive revelation. The oak is very different from the acorn, yet the life of acorn and oak forms one continuous whole. In the same way later Roman developments of doctrine are of one piece and texture with the early beliefs of the Church.

The presuppositions of any writer give the key to his thought. It is necessary, therefore, to examine somewhat carefully the underlying assumptions which Newman makes in applying his hypothesis to the facts before him. We shall find that he has three assumptions which contain beforehand all that he wants to prove. His argument is a palpable example of begging the question.

(1) The first assumption is, that a revelation, once given, must of necessity continue to be given. "I have been arguing, in respect to the revealed doctrine, given to us from above in Christianity, . . . that, if development must be, then, whereas Revelation is a heavenly gift, He who gave it virtually has not given it, unless He has also secured it from perversion and corruption, in all such development as comes upon it by the necessity of its nature, or, in other words, that that intellectual action through successive generations, which is the organ of development, must, so far forth as it can claim to have been put in charge of the Revelation, be in its determinations infallible."[1]

(2) The last words of this quotation introduce us to Newman's second assumption, the foundation of his whole argument, that of the existence of an infallible authority which shall con-

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 92. Cp. also the following, pp. 79–80: "If the Christian doctrine, as originally taught, admits of true and important developments, as was argued in the foregoing section, this is a strong antecedent argument in favour of a provision in the Dispensation for putting a seal of authority upon those developments. The probability of their being known to be true varies with that of their truth. The two ideas indeed are quite distinct, I grant, of revealing and of guaranteeing a truth, and they are often distinct in fact. There are various revelations all over the earth, which do not carry with them the evidence of their divinity. Such are the inward suggestions and secret illuminations granted to so many individuals; such are the traditionary doctrines which are found among the heathen. . . . There is nothing impossible in the notion of a revelation occurring without evidence that it is a revelation; just as human sciences are a divine gift, yet are reached by our ordinary powers,

trol the course of doctrinal development. "This is the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church; for by infallibility I suppose is meant the power of deciding whether this, that, and a third, and any number of theological or ethical statements are true."[1] For one who, like Newman, held that "the essence of all religion is authority and obedience,"[2] who found in dogma the fundamental principle of religion, the desire to discover an infallible authority must have been strong. Indeed, he claims that the desire is strong in all men, and argues that its widespread existence justifies us in expecting that it will meet with fulfilment. "The common sense of mankind . . . feels that the very idea of revelation implies a present informant and guide, and that an infallible one."[3] The need for such an authority was, in Newman's judgment, especially urgent in the age in which he was living. All round him he saw unrest and unsettlement, the uncontrolled use of the speculative intellect, leading to a hopeless confusion of opinion. Authority alone could import order into the chaos.[4] Finally, the authority must be an external one. Its seat must be outside the course of the development of which it was to be judge, for so only could it exercise an impartial judgment.[5]

(3) The third assumption is, that the Roman developments of doctrine and ritual are the true and intended developments. But Newman can hardly be said to bring arguments to justify this assumption. The argument which mainly weighs with him is that possession is nine-tenths of the law. Rome holds the field; therefore what she believes is true. Her beliefs show a vitality and interconnection which they could not have, if they were untrue. This is the assumption which underlies such a passage as the following:—

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and have no claim on our faith. But Christianity is not of this nature: it is a revelation which comes to us as a revelation, as a whole, objectively, and with a profession of infallibility; and the only question to be determined relates to the matter of the revelation. If there are certain great truths, or duties, or observances, naturally and legitimately resulting from the doctrines originally professed, it is but reasonable to include these true results in the idea of the revelation itself, to consider them parts of it, and if the revelation be not only true, but guaranteed as true, to anticipate that they too will come under the privilege of that guarantee."

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 78–9.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

"If, again, Christianity being from heaven, all that is necessarily involved in it, and is evolved from it, is from heaven, and if, on the other hand, large accretions actually do exist, professing to be its true and legitimate results, our first impression naturally is, that these must be the very developments which they profess to be. Moreover, the very scale on which they have been made, their high antiquity yet present promise, their gradual formation yet precision, their harmonious order, dispose the imagination most forcibly towards the belief that a teaching so consistent with itself, so well balanced, so young and so old, not obsolete after so many centuries, but vigorous and progressive still, is the very development contemplated in the Divine scheme. These doctrines are members of one family, and suggestive, or correlative, or confirmatory, or illustrative of each other. One furnishes evidence to another, and all to each of them; if this be proved, that becomes probable. . . . You must accept the whole or reject the whole; attenuation does but enfeeble, and amputation mutilates. It is trifling to receive all but something, which is as integral as any other portion; and, on the other hand, it is a solemn thing to accept any part, for, before you know where you are, you may be carried on by a stern logical necessity to accept the whole." [1]

It will, I think, be found that the assumption that the vitality and self-multiplication of Roman doctrine is proof of its truth underlies all the seven specific tests of doctrinal development which Newman subsequently applies.

To criticise these assumptions is not difficult. (*a*) With regard to the first, what evidence is there that a revelation once given must be secured from perversion or corruption? The Christian Church, relying on the promise of its Founder, expects that it will be led into all truth, but has no guarantee that it is to be exempt from error. Why should the growth of religions differ from that of ordinary knowledge? Everywhere the search for truth is a long and laborious process, and in the field of knowledge wheat and tares grow together. Owing to the imperfection of human will and intelligence, there must, as knowledge advances, be an inevitable admixture of truth with error. And this, as we survey the history of Christianity, is

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 93–4.

certainly what appears to have occurred. Is it not more reasonable, as Mozley in his criticism of Newman suggests,[1] to suppose that, a revelation having been made, men are left to explain it and apply it by the use of their own powers? This is not an argument in favour of the old Deistic view of God as revealing Himself from time to time, and then in the intervals withdrawing His guidance from men. It is compatible with the Christian belief in the work of the Holy Spirit, but it allows room for human search and error. Apart from the fact that loyalty to the Church of Rome compelled him to make this assumption, what is the explanation of Newman's attitude? Is he afraid of free investigation, afraid to commit the divine barque of revelation to the storms of human error and misrepresentation? Is he, as some have said, at heart a sceptic who, fearing scepticism, forces himself to believe? Or is he so convinced a believer in revelation, that his faith will not allow him to admit the presence of any uncertainty in his creed?

(*b*) The third assumption, that the Roman developments are alone the true ones, is a bare-faced *petitio principii*. Of the original revelation there have been many developments. To assume that of these that followed by Rome alone is valid, and to attempt to prove the assumption merely by remaking it at each stage of the proof, is a procedure which can hardly be called reasonable.

(*c*) But, as has been already said, the key to Newman's whole argument is the assumption of the existence of an infallible authority. But the doctrine of infallibility is itself an example of a development. It is one of those later dogmas of the Roman Church which are an addition to the primitive creed; and its history shows a distinct evolution, in which the seat of authority has been transferred from the Curia to the Pope, who is now regarded as *primus*, not as *primus inter pares*.[2] How, then, can that which is itself a development be used as the arbiter or criterion of development? Newman himself tells us that the infallible authority must be external to the development; it cannot, therefore, partake in it. Again, is there need, as Newman assumes, of any infallible

[1] *The Theory of Development*, by J. B. Mozley, ed. 1878. Cp. pp. 86–125, and especially p. 95.

[2] Cp. *Mediævalism*, by George Tyrrell, ch. iv.

authority? If there is, does the presence of the need guarantee that it will be supplied? Some people who are constitutionally timid or lazy may welcome such an authority in religion, if they can persuade themselves that they have found it; others will prefer to investigate truth by the critical faculties which God has given them. Granted, however, that the need exists, what evidence is there that it will be met? Newman offers us nothing but his personal conviction that certainty is to be found. The gravest objection, however, to Newman's assumption is, that it removes the whole development of doctrine outside the region in which the ordinary forces of history operate. The history of the Church is part of general history. A historian cannot make exceptions in favour of one particular church, or one special line of doctrinal advance. He cannot apply his historical canons to the history of other churches, and exempt one church from their operation.[1] But this is what Newman does. Historical development in the Roman Church is for him on a plane altogether different from historical development elsewhere. There truth and error intermingle their waters; here alone the stream flows clear. Elsewhere wheat and tares grow together until the harvest; here the vigilant eye of the infallible authority detects the earliest growth of the tare, and uproots it. As a study of the difficulties in which Roman apologists find themselves, when they have to defend the dogma of infallibility, Newman's essay is illuminating; but his assumption invalidates any claim which it may make to be considered a genuine historical study of the development of doctrine.

Let us pass now to a closer examination of Newman's treatment of the idea of development. Two factors are involved in any process of natural growth, the organism and its environment, the seed and the soil. In investigating a process of development we cannot leave out of account the influence of the surroundings. Even though the initial impulse to growth belongs to the organism, the environment exercises a formative influence. A wild plant transferred to a cultivated garden adopts new characters. A slum child, if placed in a refined home, quickly learns new manners and habits. Christianity may be likened to a seed sown in different soils. The new

[1] Cp. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 36–7.

religion in the course of its development came into contact with older faiths and civilisations, which, in varying degrees, influenced its line of growth.[1] It gave to them, doubtless, more than it received from them, but it unquestionably received something. To determine the extent of its debt is one of the main problems of modern theology. Any one, therefore, who would study the historical development of the religion must pay attention to the influence of the environment. History is not biology, and historical evolution cannot be construed solely by means of biological categories; but the historian and the biologist have this in common, that both are concerned to analyse a process of growth in which the surroundings of the organism play an important part. Newman is well aware of this. In his very interesting analysis of the development of ideas he points out that "an idea not only modifies, but is modified, or at least influenced by, the state of things in which it is carried out, and is dependent in various ways on the circumstances which surround it."[2] "It grows when it incorporates, and its identity is found, not in isolation, but in continuity and sovereignty."[3] But when he comes to treat of the development of Christian doctrine, he tends to lose sight of this biological conception of evolution, and to substitute for it a logical conception. This confusion in his thought will become plainer later on. Meanwhile we must regard him as in intention a stout defender of real development in doctrine, a development which embraces not only the later Roman dogmas, but also the period before the formation of the Nicene creed. Where, he asks, is the evidence that the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity was formally held in ante-Nicene times? "I do not see in what sense it can be said that there is a *consensus* of primitive divines in its favour, which will not avail also for certain doctrines of the Roman Church, which will presently come into mention."[4] "No one doctrine can be named which starts complete at first, and gains nothing afterwards from the investigations of faith and the attacks of heresy. The Church went forth from the old world in haste, as the Israelites from

[1] For an interesting study of this question, cp. Gardner's *The Growth of Christianity*.

[2] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 39.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Egypt, 'with their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.'"[1]

Newman, therefore, abandons the Vincentian canon *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, "the rule of historical interpretation which has been professed in the English school of divines," on the ground that it cannot be uniformly applied. "How many Fathers, how many places, how many instances, constitute a fulfilment of the test proposed?"[2] Nothing is more certain than that Newman at this time believed in a real development of doctrine, in the emergence of new truth which was not there before. And the reader who studies the earlier pages of the essay, and grasps the suggestive teaching in them upon the development of ideas under the influence of their surroundings, is led to expect a free and genuinely historical treatment of the growth of doctrine. He finds, however, instead a confusion between biological and logical development, and the persistence of the assumption that Roman doctrinal developments must be right.

Newman desired to distinguish clearly between biological and logical evolution. He writes: "The development, then, of an idea is not like an investigation worked out on paper, in which each successive advance is a pure evolution from a foregoing, but it is carried on through and by means of communities of men and their leaders and guides; and it employs their minds as its instruments, and depends on them, while it uses them."[3] How is it, then, that he fails to be consistent? A possible explanation is that, though he starts by saying that Christianity came into the world as an idea or spiritual force, he goes on to treat of it as an institution. For the free evolution of the idea amid its surroundings is substituted the historical continuity of the Roman Church. Rome fills the field of his vision. There she stands, with her compact system, her ordered growth of doctrine, her claim to authority and catholicity; the only Church which dares to call herself infallible. Her achievements justify her claim. The claim must be true, otherwise she would not occupy her present position. There is a rigidity about an institution which is lacking in an idea. An institution lends itself to a theory of logical development in

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 68.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 68. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

a manner which is foreign to an idea interpreted as a spiritual agency or force. Another explanation is, that Newman fails to pay sufficient attention to the factor of the environment. He does indeed quote a beautiful passage from his *Essays*, which contains the thought that the seeds of truth "have variously taken root" in different soils, and hence that it is natural to find resemblances between Christianity and other religions.[1] But instead of applying this thought to Christianity itself, and seeing in it seeds which have variously ripened under the formative influence of changing surroundings, he sets up Rome, which he considers to be the only true Church, as the infallible arbiter of the developments which may be regarded as genuine. She it is who, by a special providence, has been enabled "to draw and collect together" her creed "out of the world, and, in this sense, as in others, to 'suck the milk of the Gentiles, and to suck the breast of kings.'"[2] His assumption that Rome alone is right blinds him to the fact that the Spirit is operative in the non-Roman developments of Christianity. He skilfully uses history to illustrate a theory which has been formed in independence of history.[3] The Roman Church is exempted from the operation of a real historical development.

A second criticism of Newman's treatment of development is, that in tracing back the stream of evolution he does not follow it to the fountain-head. Christianity begins with the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ. From Him the whole movement takes its rise; to Him it owes its perpetual inspiration. But Newman, who passed from Christianity as an idea to Christianity as an institution, really begins with the Church as fully formed and possessed of a complete ecclesiastical organisation. The idea, says Newman, had to clothe itself, "and to form the instruments and methods of its prosperity and warfare."[4] But if you grant that Christianity had to embody itself in a polity or church, it does not follow that the organisation obtaining in any particular century is to be for all time the type and norm of organisation. Newman's position can be undermined, if we carry back to the beginning our investigations into the origin of Christianity. He has a con-

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 380.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 381.
[3] Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[4] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 77.

ception of Christianity as a universal religion, because he sees a vision of the worldwide sovereignty of Rome. But he misses the true universality of Christianity, that of spirit and principle, because he does not start from the creative Personality of Christ. If he had remained true to his conception of Christianity as a spiritual energy or idea, he would have seen that the idea might, indeed must, clothe itself in more ways than one. No single ecclesiastical organisation can claim to be the adequate embodiment of the Christian religion, no, nor all the organisations taken together. So rich was the revelation given by Christ that it is naturally capable of shaping for itself many external embodiments. The very form in which the revelation was given, with the maximum, as it were, of idea, and the minimum of organisation, seems to imply that it was Christ's intention that its outward manifestations should differ. Under the differences of form may be a true identity of spirit; uniformity is not necessary to unity. And if judgment is to be passed upon the various developments of Christianity, where can the standard of judgment be found, except in the teaching and Person of its Founder? We can discover if men have erred from the truth, only by reverting to the truth as it was first given to the world. The Roman Catholic who can say with Dr. Wiseman, "We believe that no new doctrine can be introduced into the Church, but that every doctrine which we hold has existed and been *taught* in it, ever since the time of the apostles,"[1] is consistent in condemning the non-Roman developments of Christianity, provided that he has first satisfied himself that Christ or His apostles taught a cult of the Virgin, or the infallibility of the Church. But Newman, who argues that from the first there has been doctrinal development, and that in primitive times the Nicene creed was not formally held, is hopelessly illogical, when he does not push his inquiry into origins back to the source. If doctrine has developed, so has organisation. And, if you admit development, why rule out as wrong all non-Roman developments? The truth is that Newman, as Mozley points out, moves somewhat uneasily, when he is prosecuting his search into pre-Nicene developments. "While he makes Nicene truth the development of something before it, he does not fairly face the result that what

[1] *The Theory of Development*, p. 212.

was before it was not Nicene truth."[1] He wavers between opposing views, now seeming to assert that certain doctrines were non-existent, at another time seeming to argue that they were present, but were not formally promulgated. If there was this uncertainty about doctrine, there was equally uncertainty about organisation. Perhaps Newman felt this, and so sought to cut the knot by starting with a Church fully organised.

At this point we must try to understand more clearly Newman's conception of development. He was confronted with three apologetic theories, none of which satisfied him. The first maintained that there had been no development of doctrine. This was the old, orthodox view. According to it the Church had from the time of the apostles taught the full truth. If a doctrine was not formally stated, this was only because it had never been questioned, but was universally accepted as part of the orthodox system of belief. The councils of the Church did not meet in order, by discussion and argument, to arrive at the truth. They met to affirm truth which was already known to be such, and to which the general mind of the Church had given its adherence.[2]

The second theory was that of the *disciplina arcani*, which finds to-day but few defenders among Roman apologists. According to this theory, the whole truth was known to the few who were in positions of power and authority. They did not make it publicly known in its fulness, because the general mind was not ripe for its reception, but unfolded it gradually, as occasion demanded.

The third theory professed to admit that there had been a development of doctrine, and that new truth had come to light in course of time which was not known to be such in earlier ages. The plain facts of history seemed to necessitate such an admission. But this was the very charge of innovation which Protestants brought against Rome. How could the charge be met? It was met by interpreting development as the making explicit what had before been implicit. The development in question was therefore not a real, but a logical, development. It may be likened to the old biological belief, that the embryo was a perfect miniature of the adult which was to spring from

[1] *The Theory of Development*, p. 199.

[2] Cp. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 16.

it. The growth of the embryo was technically called "evolution," but growth here simply meant enlargement. Nothing emerged as the embryo developed which was not there before. In the same way it was argued that all later developments of doctrine were implicitly contained in the original teaching. Admit certain premisses, and certain conclusions can logically be shown to follow from them. A piece of paper may be folded into small compass. When you unfold it, you do not add to its bulk; you merely spread it out. The whole was already there in the compressed state. Hence it was argued that the fathers of the Church did really hold the doctrines of modern Romanism, because these could be shown by a dialectical process to be implicit in what they believed.[1]

Now Newman was not satisfied with any of these theories. The facts of history were against the two first. Historical research was every day making it plainer that there had been doctrinal development. And the dialectical theory of development was, as Newman saw, of no help to the modern apologist who wished honestly to face the facts. In the first place, common sense revolted against a process so tortuous and subtle, in which a clever dialectician could make unbelief appear as belief, and could prove almost anything he wished. In the second place, the theory implied that the Church which prided herself upon being the custodian of the faith had signally failed to discharge her responsibility. For, while it was granted that the original apostles possessed the full truth, the subsequent history of the Church was a process of gradual recovery of what had been lost in sub-apostolic times. Dogma, on this theory, grows in explicitness. Its full triumph lies in the future. As Tyrrell puts it: "The process begins, as it ends, in a period of maximum illumination. From an initial maximum of evolution it passes immediately to a maximum of involution, and thence moves slowly and laboriously towards its original condition."[2]

Newman, therefore, set out to give a new interpretation to development. He viewed Christianity as an "idea," by which, as we have seen, he meant a spiritual force or energy. When we speak of an idea we usually mean a concept. Dialectical

[1] Cp. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, pp. 17, 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

or logical evolution is concerned with concepts. But Newman was not thinking of concepts. He was thinking of Christianity as a vital power or influence, a germ of life which was to find outward embodiment in a polity and a system of doctrine. His conception of evolution was biological, not logical. How far away he was in intention from any theory of dialectical development may be seen by his account of the test of development which he calls "logical sequence." This, he says, "will include any progress of the mind from one judgment to another, as, for instance, by way of moral fitness, which may not admit of analysis into premiss and conclusion."[1] His conception, then, of Christianity is the conception of a spiritual influence which gradually moulds for itself an appropriate outward embodiment. As the development proceeds the embodiment assumes new forms. Fresh truth is unfolded which was not there before. But the innovations harmonise with the original revelation. They show the same general character and spirit. They are of a piece with the old, and a sympathetic appreciation at once recognises them as such. The whole development hangs together; one doctrine harmonises with another. All are natural outgrowths from the same stem.

This was a conception of development very different from any which Roman apologists had hitherto set forth, and it implied the abandonment of the traditional apologetic, as was clearly seen at the time by Newman's scholastic opponents. It meant that the Apostles did not possess the truth in its theological completeness; indeed, such possession would belong to the Church only when the development had come full circle in some distant future. Newman, however, did not deny that a plenary revelation had been given to the apostles; but it was a revelation for faith, in the form of an idea, not as yet articulated into a body of theological dogma. Doctrinal development had to take place; and it was Newman's contention that, if a comparison were made between the later Roman developments and the original revelation, their common identity of spirit and character would become apparent.

In criticising this theory the first point which strikes us is the vagueness of Newman's conception of continuity. The final appeal appears to be to an appreciative taste which recog-

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 382.

nises a general harmony and congruity between the earlier and later stages of the development. But *de gustibus non est disputandum*. What has Newman to say to one who objects that he can see no such congruity? There can be little compelling power in an apologetic which sets up the feeling of each individual as the final criterion. We must remember what Newman's object was. He was concerned to defend the system of Rome. He was not a modernist, ready to abandon parts of the traditional theology, or to restate old dogmas in new language. He accepted the conclusions which the past had handed down, and wished to preserve them intact. His one aim was to suggest some method by which a bridge could be built between new and old, and the charge of doctrinal innovation could be successfully met. Can we believe that this appeal to taste was his only weapon of defence? Now it is interesting to note that, when Newman had been for some years a Roman Catholic, he definitely abandoned the theory of development which it was his intention to defend in the earlier essay. He writes as follows: "First of all, and in as few words as possible, and *ex abundanti cautelâ*—Every Catholic holds that the Christian dogmas were in the Church from the time of the apostles; that they were in their substance what they are now; that they existed before the formulas were publicly adopted, in which as time went on they were defined and recorded."[1]

But did the early Church hold the doctrines of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, or of papal infallibility? Can anyone who fairly surveys the historical evidence answer that question in the affirmative? If you are to defend Newman's later assertion, you can do it only by the use of some subtle dialectic against which common sense rebels. And even then you cannot prove that the early Church believed these doctrines; you can only prove that a clever dialectician of to-day may show that it is not impossible to demonstrate that they were implicit in the primitive beliefs. You are, in a word, back in the position of a defender of logical or dialectical development.

[1] Quoted from Gore's *Bampton Lectures*, 1891, p. 186, and note on p. 253. The quotation from Newman is from *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, Pickering, 1874. I am indebted to the Bishop of Oxford for a letter, in which he kindly explained a point of reference which was not clear to me in this connection.

That Newman should at a later period have abandoned the theory of biological development in favour of a logical theory at once makes us doubt whether the logical theory is not also present in the essay. A careful reading of the latter proves, I think, that it is, and that Newman's thought is confused. The confusion may, perhaps, be traced to the fact that he wrote "with an eye fixed on his scholastic critics, and with a view to dissemble the difference between their conception and his own as much as possible."[1] Take, for example, the following sentence in the essay: "I mean to give instances of one doctrine leading to another; so that, *if the former be admitted, the latter can hardly be denied*, and the latter can hardly be called a corruption without taking exception to the former."[2] We have here, surely, the logician speaking, and not the historian. One doctrine leads to another, we are told. Logic then comes in to justify the process, and to show that, if you grant the premisses, the conclusion follows of necessity. Take, again, this sentence: "There is a certain continuous advance and determinate path, which belongs to the history of a doctrine, policy, or institution, and which impresses upon the common sense of mankind, that what it ultimately becomes is the issue of what it was at first."[3]

Now, it may be said that there is nothing in this quotation to show that Newman was abandoning his biological theory of development. But the difficulty is that the common sense of a large portion of mankind refuses to admit that later Roman doctrines are a legitimate issue of primitive belief: and Newman, if he is relying upon the test of sympathetic appreciation alone, has no answer to give to the man who says that he cannot appreciate the congruity between new and old. The more we read the essay, the more, I think, do we become convinced that Newman is defending a logical evolution. Somehow or other he had to derive the new from the old, and to show that the beginning of necessity involved the end. So penetrating a thinker could hardly be content to make his apologetic a matter of taste alone. We cannot but feel that he comes to his task with his mind already made up,

[1] Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 30.

[2] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 383. The italics are mine.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 195. Cp. also p. 400 (the passage is quoted later in this chapter).

and that his prepossession in favour of Rome colours his whole argument.

A third criticism of Newman's treatment of development turns upon the use which he makes of the notion of corruption. He has to meet the criticism that many of the doctrinal developments of the Roman Church are corruptions or perversions of the original revelation. Now he defines corruption as "the breaking up of life preparatory to its termination. This resolution of a body into its component parts is the stage before its dissolution; it begins when life has reached its perfection, and it is the sequel or rather the continuation of that process towards perfection, being at the same time the reversal and undoing of what went before." [1] "A corruption is a development in that very stage in which it ceases to illustrate, and begins to disturb, the acquisitions gained in its previous history." [2] Corruption is distinguished from decay by two marks. It is of short duration, and is accompanied by energetic and vigorous dissolution. "It is true that decay, which is one form of corruption, is slow; but decay is a state in which there is no violent or vigorous action at all, whether of a conservative or a destructive character, the hostile influence being powerful enough to enfeeble the functions of life, but not to quicken its own process." [3] "Thus, while a corruption is distinguished from decay by its energetic action, it is distinguished from a development by its transitory character." [4]

In the face of these definitions we may well wonder what ground Newman could find for condemning all non-Roman developments of Christianity. There were many of these which had been long enough in the field to escape condemnation under the head of corruption, for a corruption must be of short duration. Did Newman class them under the head of decay? Decay, it is true, is slow; but it is characterised by apathy and lifelessness. Yet these other developments, or many of them, were anything but lifeless. Speaking of decay, Newman says: "And thus we see opinions, usages, and systems, which are of venerable and imposing aspect, but which have no soundness within them, and keep together from a habit of consistence, or from dependence on political

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 170–1.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

institutions, or they become almost peculiarities of a country, or the habits of a race, or the fashions of society. And then, at length, perhaps, they go off suddenly, and die out under the first rough influence from without. . . . Such apparently is the state of the Nestorian and Monophysite communions . . . such too is that of Protestantism, or (as it sometimes calls itself) attachment to the Establishment, which is not infrequently the boast of the respectable and wealthy among ourselves."[1]

There is no argument here; there is nothing but the assumption that Rome alone is vigorous and progressive. Even if Newman had some grounds for applying to the Anglican Church of the years 1800–30 the judgment upon Sardis, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead," and for viewing with abhorrence the control over the Church exercised by a Liberal Government, he had himself been instrumental in producing in the succeeding decade a striking revival in the Church. In addition, the vitality of other Christian communities might surely have taught him a different lesson.

But this is not all. As Mozley points out,[2] Newman excludes from his notion of corruption just that form of it, the corruption of exaggeration, which characterises the later Roman developments. Corruption for Newman is the destruction of the type or norm. But may there not be a corruption in which the type is preserved, and yet is overlaid with exaggerations and excesses? Just as in the field of character "courage becomes rashness, and love becomes fondness," the original type of the virtue remaining; so in doctrine a parallel exaggeration may occur. The doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, the cultus of the Virgin and the saints, are extravagant developments of the body of primitive beliefs. Correct the definition of corruption, and Newman's argument falls to the ground.

In conclusion, we may briefly examine Newman's seven tests or "notes" of a true development.

1. *Preservation of Type.*—There has been, says Newman, a healthy development, if the idea or the institution retains throughout its growth the same type. He applies this test

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 205. [2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 6–39.

to Christianity by asking whether the world views the Church now as it viewed it in primitive times, and concludes that it does so. The Church is despised, hated, regarded as superstitious, and the home of sophistry and imposture.[1] But the fact that the hostility of the world to the Church has shown throughout the centuries the same general features does not provide Newman with any argument in favour of the truth of Roman developments of doctrine. This is what he is concerned to prove, and this is what he fails to prove. In the first place, when you talk of identity of type you have to settle what your type is. In the second place, as we have seen, there may be an identity of type, and yet the type may be overlaid with exaggerations. Newman has an interesting discussion as to the meaning of identity in a growing organism. In what sense is the oak the same as the acorn, or the English nation of to-day identical with the nation of a thousand years ago, or the Christology of the creeds with the Christology of the synoptic writers? But his reasoning will not convert anyone who is not already prepared to accept Romanism as the typical form of Christianity. To determine the type of Christianity you must go back to its germinal form; and that certainly is not Romanism, whatever else it may be. Regarded as an institution, it is not easy to describe its type, for the germinal form of Christianity was not institutional. Regarded as an idea or spirit, it can hardly be denied that the type has been preserved in other communions than that of Rome. Type, after all, is not anything rigidly fixed. It can stand, as Newman admits, only for a mean round which variations occur; and departures from the mean are to that extent departures from type. The Roman may regard the later doctrinal developments of his Church as preservative of the type. The Protestant regards them as destructive of it. Argument between the two is impossible, for there is no initial agreement as to the nature of the type.

2. *Continuity of Principles.*—"A development, to be faithful, must retain both the doctrine and the principle with which it started."[2] Principles underlie doctrines, and "doctrines are developed by the operation of principles, and

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 207–322.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

develop variously according to these principles."[1] Newman gives a list of the principles of Christianity, and from it selects four for detailed treatment—Faith, Theology, Scripture, Dogma. It will suffice, if we refer to his treatment of Faith. "The principle of faith . . . is the correlative of dogma, being the absolute acceptance of the Divine Word with an internal assent, in opposition to the informations, if such, of sight and reason."[2] He shows how, both in primitive and modern times, the Church has insisted upon the importance of faith. But what does this prove which in any way helps Newman? Because faith is an operative principle of Christianity, that does not make Romanism true. Faith may run out into credulity and superstition. How can the presence of the principle guarantee the truth of the doctrines in which the principle expresses itself? The same principle, as Newman himself allows, may underlie the most varied expressions of it. It is the merest assumption to say that because the Roman Church shows a continuity of principle in her teaching, therefore all which she teaches is true.

3. *Power of Assimilation.*—Just as an organism develops by assimilating food from without and building it up into its own tissue, so, says Newman, has the Church shown a vigorous development by incorporating into itself the elements of truth scattered in the world outside it. This continued capacity to assimilate is proof that the development has been a true one. "An eclectic, conservative, assimilating, healing, moulding process, a unitive power, is of the essence, and a third test of a faithful development."[3] Now undoubtedly Newman gives us here a most suggestive principle for application to the history of Christianity. The religion which Jesus introduced into the world possesses in high degree this assimilative power. It has thriven, because it has proved itself capable of taking up and transforming the various elements of truth with which it has come in contact. Part of its universality consists in this very capacity. On the other hand, it does not follow that all which it has taken up has been good. In its future development assimilation may be balanced by rejection. There may be elements in the complex which we call

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 180.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 325. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Christianity which are really incompatible with its essential spirit. They are there, but they have not been truly incorporated with it; just as indigestible material may pass into the human body. The fact that a religion possesses assimilative power gives you no criterion for judging of the quality of the matter assimilated. Newman, however, assumes that the Roman Church possesses an eclectic power which infallibly chooses the right material for assimilation; and this assumption renders nugatory his application of the test.[1]

4. *Chronic Vigour.*—We have already dealt with this in discussing Newman's treatment of corruption and decay; and nothing more need here be said about it.

5. *Anticipation of its Future.*—The discovery, that is, in the earlier stages of a development of hints of what is found later. "Instances of a development which is to come, though vague and isolated, may occur from the very first, though a lapse of time may be necessary to bring them to perfection."[2]

I fail to see how this test can be in any way applied to establish the truth of a doctrine. Because anticipations of a doctrine are found in early times, it does not follow that the doctrine is true, unless you assume that the human mind is not equally liable to err at all periods. The test may be of some use to those who maintain the theory of the *disciplina arcani*, but it cannot help Newman. It is worth while to quote a passage from the chapter in which Newman deals with the application of this test. He writes: "We know little of the thoughts, and the prayers, and the meditations, and the discourses of the early disciples of Christ, at a time when these professed developments were not recognised and duly treated in the theological system; yet it appears, even from what remains, that the atmosphere of the Church was, as it were, charged with them from the first, and delivered itself of them from time to time, in this way or that, in various places and persons, as occasion elicited them, testifying the presence of

[1] Cp. the following, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 379: "The Church has been entrusted with the dispensation of grace. For if she can convert heathen appointments into spiritual rites and usages, what is this but to be in possession of a treasure, and to exercise a discretionary power in its application?" Or this on p. 382 (quoted from the *Essays*): "We consider that a Divine promise keeps the Catholic Church from doctrinal corruption."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

a vast body of thought within it, which one day would take shape and position."[1] Could these words have been written by one who was a consistent upholder of biological evolution? Are they not additional evidence that Newman was really falling back on a logical theory? The whole cycle of doctrine was there from the first implicitly. The atmosphere was charged with it: it was only awaiting the appropriate hour to make itself explicit.

6. *Conservative Action upon its Past.*—"A true development, then, may be described as one which is conservative of the course of antecedent developments, being really those antecedents and something besides them; it is an addition which illustrates, not obscures, corroborates, not corrects, the body of thought from which it proceeds; and this is its characteristic, as contrasted with a corruption."[2] But does Anglicanism show nothing of this conservative action? It is true that at the Reformation there was rejection as well as conservation, and for Newman this meant the condemnation of the Anglican Church. But he could condemn, only by assuming that Rome had never made a mistake, and therefore need cast off none of her beliefs. Development, as interpreted by this test, is equivalent to growth by accumulation, a quasi-mechanical process. In true growth, however, rejection is the constant accompaniment of assimilation.

7. *Logical Sequence.*—This is the test upon which, I think, Newman places most emphasis. I have already discussed it earlier, in treating of the confusion in Newman's mind between biological and logical evolution. He tells us that developments for the most part take place silently and unconsciously; then later on "logic is brought in to arrange and inculcate what no science was employed in gaining."[3] If such subsequent analysis reveals a logical character in the whole movement, we may be sure that the development has been a true one. But Newman gives an extremely wide interpretation to the phrase "logical sequence." It "will include any progress of the mind from one judgment to another, as, for instance, by way of moral fitness, which may not admit of analysis into premiss and conclusion."[4] So long as there

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 400.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 190.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

is advance and expansion it would seem that Newman is satisfied. His critical judgment is overpowered in presence of the historical development of Romanism. Rome has developed. The mustard seed has become a great tree. There is "gravity, distinctness, precision, and majesty"[1] in her advance. She has greatly dared, and greatly achieved. In contrast with the divisions of Protestantism she shows a united front. Her success proves her to be right. But his reasoning will not convince anyone who has not already made up his mind in favour of Rome, who is not already determined to find in the facts what he wishes to prove.

Of the tests as a whole, then, it must be confessed that they fail entirely to achieve the end for which they were set up. An application of them by other minds to the same subject-matter yields results of a very different order. Yet they remain a witness to the remarkable originality of their author's thought. The complete logic of development still awaits discovery; but no one, who is seeking for valid criteria by which to test the conception of evolution as applied to theology, can afford to neglect Newman's essay. In particular, what he has to say about the history of an idea, the spiritual energy which embodies itself in changing outward forms, deserves the most careful study. It is this portion of his teaching which has inspired the Modernists, and is most truly in accord with the spirit of historical inquiry. The pity is that Newman himself did not remain faithful to the principles laid down in the earlier sections of the essay, but for the free evolution of the idea substituted a theory which is condemned both by reason and history.

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 191.

CHAPTER XVII

COLERIDGE

In the development of English theology, as far as we have at present traced it, two main movements have been distinguished. One is the Oxford Movement, which may fairly be described as in general character ecclesiastical. The other is the critico-historical movement associated with the early Liberals of the Oriel group. For the moment this latter movement seemed to have suffered a check, as Tractarianism gathered force. But the check was only temporary. The movement held within itself seeds of living thought which only needed the appropriate environment to evoke their latent powers of growth. And this environment was steadily being prepared by the spread of the historical spirit and the development of Biblical criticism. We have now to consider a third movement which, by way of contrast, may be called philosophical or spiritual. In the alliance between this movement, and that of which the germs are to be found in the historical criticism of the early Liberals, is revealed the most fruitful line of progress which English theology was to take in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Coleridge was the intellectual father of the philosophical movement which was continued by Julius Hare and Maurice; though in mental power and range of influence the disciples cannot be compared with the master. I have allotted a special chapter to Coleridge as being, what Mill called him, one of the "seminal" minds of the century. But I have attempted no exhaustive account of his thought or influence. Any such account would need a volume of considerable size. All that I have tried to do is to indicate some of the main directions in which he seems to me to have influenced the theological thought of England. Even this limited task is no easy one, owing to the nature of his genius, and the unsystematic character of his writings.

Mr. Alfred Benn, in *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*,[1] describes Coleridge in the following terms:—"We must bear in mind the sort of writer with whom we have to deal, a master of the most impalpable distinctions and the subtlest equivocations, a slothful, pusillanimous dreamer, in whom sincerity, if it ever existed, had been destroyed by the use of laudanum."[2] The charge of confused thinking which is brought against him is mainly directed to proof of this one point, that Coleridge was really a pantheist, and that it is an absurdity to look upon him as an apologist for orthodox Christianity.[3] If we grant that Coleridge was a confused thinker, we can hardly credit his critic with being an impartial one. The strong anti-Christian bias which colours the whole of Mr. Benn's two volumes, and the narrow rationalism which constitutes his creed, make us accept with caution his verdict upon a thinker who, whatever his defects, was at least trying to drop his plummet into the depths of the spirit's life, who realised that man was essentially a spiritual being, and that some form of idealism could alone provide a solution of the mystery which surrounds his existence. Mr. Benn's criticism of Coleridge lacks that needed touch of sympathy with the author criticised, without which no writer on religion can be fairly judged. A defect somewhat similar in kind characterises Traill's monograph in the *English Men of Letters* series; though here it is true to say that the author makes practically no attempt to appraise the worth of Coleridge's philosophy or theology. He frankly confesses that, having been trained in a wholly different school of thought, he is unable to do justice to transcendental philosophy. Far more satisfying is Tulloch's chapter, "Coleridge and His School," in *Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century*. This, indeed, is the best general estimate of Coleridge's influence on subsequent

[1] Two volumes, 1906.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 262–3.

[3] Mr. Benn complains that no history of Coleridge's religious opinions exists. He sets himself, therefore, to supply one, at least in outline; and comes to the conclusion that Coleridge never abandoned his early pantheism. It is curious to find that Mr. Shawcross, in his admirable Introduction to the *Biographia Literaria*, reaches a conclusion diametrically opposite, and acquits Coleridge altogether of the charge of pantheism. Cp. Benn, *op. cit.*, vol. i. ch. vi.; and Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by J. Shawcross (2 vols.).

theology with which I am familiar; and it is much to be regretted that the volume containing this lecture is out of print. Very valuable also is Hort's essay on Coleridge in *Cambridge Essays*, 1856, where, though the treatment of Coleridge's theological opinions is somewhat slight, full justice is done to his philosophy. One other important essay of a different kind may be mentioned, that by J. S. Mill in the *Westminster Review* of March 1840.[1] Mill is not concerned with Coleridge's theology, but with the political aspects of his thinking. He sees plainly that utilitarianism lacks, what Coleridge and the German idealists could supply, a true philosophy of society and history, and urges, much to the abhorrence of his shallower Radical colleagues, a fusion of Benthamism with the deeper thought of Coleridge. His appreciation of Coleridge is one more proof that Mill's mind was too large to move easily within the narrow limits of orthodox empiricism; is proof too that in Coleridge we are dealing with a thinker of far-reaching influence. Mr. Benn, however, is ready to admit this, and decides that it is of more importance to discover what his disciples believed to have been Coleridge's doctrine, than to try to piece together a consistent system out of the fragmentary writings of Coleridge himself. But the implication is that the master received at the hands of his pupils a credit which he did not deserve. Tulloch and Hort, on the other hand, coming to their subject with larger vision and deeper insight, lay bare the leading principles of Coleridge's thought, and succeed in showing that, however confusedly they may have been stated, such principles existed.

Now we may grant at once that Coleridge was not a completely consistent thinker, and that as a writer he was hopelessly unsystematic. He thought and wrote in fragments. His philosophical and theological creed was never embodied in any single treatise, but has to be collected from many different sources. Hints and suggestions flashed out in all directions from his mind, as the sparks from the red-hot metal on the anvil. He had not a little of the prophet's insight, his consciousness of a message to deliver, his sense of the supreme reality of the spiritual world, but he had also the occasionalism and informality of the prophetic method. But to how many

[1] Reprinted in vol. i. of Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions*.

thinkers, belonging even to the first order, can the test of complete consistency be successfully applied? Kant was not consistent. Hegel, though he set himself to realise the ideal of a logically rounded fabric of thought, has more than one school of interpreters. No nicely squared system of exegesis will contain the whole of Plato's thinking. The very genius of these men consists in the fact that they saw the vastness of truth, the gleam of the "untravelled world," whose margin ever receded as they approached it. To apprehend truth, and particularly truth which relates to God and the human spirit's connection with God, man's mind must always be growing; and where there is growth there can be no finality. Coleridge must be judged, not by any hard and fast standard of rigid consistency, but by the general tendency of his thought, and in the light of its large principles. Seed scattered irregularly grows to maturity. A sower, after all, need not sow with mechanical precision to be sure of his harvest.

(1) In the *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge gives us some account of the way in which he freed his mind from the trammels of the sensationalist and mechanical philosophy which had first attracted him.[1] He sketches at some length the history of the law of association, with particular reference to Hartley's theory of vibrations; a theory which, if it is logically carried out, reduces ideas to their antecedent configurate vibrations, and makes every act of thought or will the product of blind mechanism. As we read the story of his conversion to a more spiritual creed, we see that it was primarily brought about by his recognition of the real, causal activity of the will. Deny the existence of such activity, and all the basal conceptions of ethics and theology will quickly be shown to be illusory by the same disintegrating criticism which Hume thought he had successfully applied to the notion of cause and effect.[2] Final causes, Coleridge saw, could not be treated as efficient causes. Man possessed a power of initiative of which no theorising could rob him. In the *Aids to Reflection* (1825), which gives a more complete account of his spiritual philosophy than any other of his writings, he develops with some detail his doctrine of the will, pointing out that there is that in man

[1] Chaps. v.–x. The references are to Shawcross's edition.

[2] *Ibid.*, vii. p. 83.

which cannot be referred for its explanation to the life of nature or the mechanism of bodily organisation.

"Nature is a line in constant and continuous evolution. Its beginning is lost in the supernatural: and for our understanding therefore it must appear as a continuous line without beginning or end. But where there is no discontinuity there can be no origination, and every appearance of origination in nature is but a shadow of our own casting. It is a reflection from our own will or spirit. Herein, indeed, the will consists. This is the essential character by which will is opposed to Nature, as spirit, and raised above Nature as self-determining spirit—this namely, that it is a power of originating an act or state."[1]

If you ask for proof of this assertion, Coleridge can only refer you to your own experience, to one of your own acts of volition, preceded and accompanied as it is by a peculiar self-consciousness.[2] All speculation must begin with postulates, and the fundamental postulate of moral philosophy is that man has this power of origination. It is a postulate, because no one can prove to another that he possesses it, though he has no doubt whatever about it himself.[3] The will is "the principle of our personality."[4]

Bound up with this fact of freedom are two other ultimate facts which lie at the foundation of all Christian theology and philosophy; the reality of the law of conscience to which the responsible will is subject; and the existence of moral evil, "of evil essentially such, not by accident of outward circumstances, not derived from its physical consequences, nor from any cause out of itself. The first is a fact of consciousness; the second a fact of reason necessarily concluded from the first; and the third a fact of history interpreted by both."[5] The doctrines of human freedom, moral responsibility, and sinfulness are all stoutly maintained by Coleridge. He can make no truce, either with Hobbes and his necessitarian followers, or with Shaftesbury and the deists, with their creed of perfectionism. Man is "a fallen creature." He is "diseased in his will, in that will, which is the true and only synonyme of the word I, or the intelligent self."[6] For Coleridge, as for Kant, morality becomes

[1] *Aids*, fifth edition, 1842, p. 212, note.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 212–13, note.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

meaningless, unless you grant that man is a free and responsible agent.

(2) The *Aids to Reflection* was written with a double apologetic purpose. Coleridge wished, in the first place, to show that the doctrines of Christianity were not only perfectly reasonable and free from objection, if examined by the proper organ, the reason and conscience of men; but that Christianity was the crown and perfection of human intelligence, the truth in which all lesser truths found their fulfilment.[1] In the second place, he wished to quiet the doubter who might be alarmed at tho presence of speculative difficulties in his creed. Objections wholly speculative, he urges, may be put on one side, because speculation is not the instrument by which Christian truth is apprehended. If there was anything in Christianity repugnant to the conscience, or which ran counter to the interests of morality, then, indeed, there was ground for anxiety; but otherwise there was not.[2] Speculative difficulties might well coexist with a reasonable faith in the truth of the Christian revelation. Coleridge insists that anyone who would fairly approach the study of Christian evidences must remember that Christianity is not primarily a theory or a speculation but "a life and a living process."[3] "Try it" is his advice to the doubter.[4] Christian truth, he says, is self-evidencing. Its suitability to our needs and nature is the proof of its divine authority, a proof, the cogency of which will vary with the spiritual condition of each inquirer.[5]

The trustworthiness, then, of spiritual experience is a second leading principle of Coleridge's thought.

(3) But we have to ask what he meant by spiritual experience, and what he conceived to be the organ of spiritual apprehension. The answer which he gives to the latter question is that spiritual truth is grasped by the whole man. The Evangelicals of his day also insisted upon the validity of spiritual experience, but were apt to interpret that experience in somewhat narrow terms; emphasizing the feelings more than the reason, indeed often neglecting the reason altogether, and in the extreme wing of the party laying claim to an infallible

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, Preface, p. xiv.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[5] *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, edition 1840, p. 60.

knowledge of the workings of the divine Spirit within the heart. Coleridge upheld a broader doctrine. He widened the conception both of religion and of reason, and restored to the latter its rightful place in the interpretation of spiritual truth.[1] Man, he insists, is a unity, a living and growing organism, and cannot be divided up into compartments or faculties, except for purposes of the lecture-room. He assimilates religious truth only through the movement of his whole nature.

(4) It is in dealing with this subject that Coleridge emphasizes the important distinction between the reason and the understanding; a distinction which, if he did not owe it to Kant, he yet found to lie at the root of that thinker's philosophy; though, as will be seen, Coleridge did not impose upon reason the limitations which Kant imposed.[2] Understanding, says Coleridge, is "the faculty judging according to sense."[3] In its highest form of experience it "remains commensurate with the experimental notices of the senses from which it is generalised. Reason on the other hand either predetermines experience, or avails itself of a past experience to supersede its necessity in all future time; and affirms truths, which no sense could perceive, nor experiment verify, nor experience confirm."[4] Again, reason "is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves."[5] In its method of apprehension reason resembles sense rather than understanding, for it acts directly and immediately. It has the same relation to the spiritual and intelligible that sense has to the material and phenomenal.[6] "There is an intuition or imme-

[1] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[2] Mr. Shawcross in his Introduction to the *Biographia Literaria* shows good cause for believing that Coleridge was not, in the first instance, indebted to Kant for this distinction. He writes:—"Yet even to Kant his debt on the whole seems to have been more formal than material—to have resided rather in the scientific statement of convictions previously attained than in the acquisition of new truths. . . . This distinction, as elaborated by Kant, must have been hailed by Coleridge with especial joy; for it gave a rational basis to a presentiment of much earlier date. From the mystics Coleridge had learned that 'the products of the mere reflective faculty partook of death' (*Biog. Lit.*, vol. i. p. 198); and this, in effect, is what Kant says in the *Critique of Pure Reason*."

[3] *Aids*, p. 167. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 182. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

diate beholding, accompanied by a conviction of the necessity and universality of the truth so beholden, not derived from the senses, which intuition, when it is construed by pure sense, gives birth to the science of mathematics, and when applied to objects supersensuous or spiritual is the organ of theology or philosophy." [1]

In *The Statesman's Manual* Coleridge defines more clearly what he conceives to be the function of reason in the field of religion. He says that reason and religion differ only as a twofold activity of the same power.[2] Reason, which is neither sense, understanding, nor imagination, contains all three within itself. It cannot, therefore, be called in strict language a faculty; nor is it the "personal property of any human mind." [3] Religion is defined as "the consideration of the individual, as it exists and has its being in the universal." [4] It becomes superstition if it neglects the consideration of the universal. Finally, "in religion there is no abstraction, . . . even so doth religion finitely express the unity of the infinite Spirit by being a total act of the soul." [5]

Reason, then, in its practical aspect, as concerned that is with moral and religious truth, means for Coleridge the whole process by which spiritual experience develops in the soul. It is spiritual vision, the grasp upon supersensible realities, "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." It includes emotion. It is thought suffused with emotion.[6] It represents an activity of our whole being. Coleridge seeks to show, on the one hand, in opposition to the materialist, that a merely negative or sceptical attitude in religion is illogical, that we have the capacity for reaching truth about spiritual things; and, on the other hand, that the instrument of spiritual apprehension is not any special part of ourselves, but rather our total personality which acts as a whole. But the truth so reached

[1] *Aids*, p. 183. For Coleridge's use of this distinction between speculative and practical reason, see note F at the end of this chapter.

[2] Appendix B, p. 258 (ed. 1839).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 266. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 260. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

[6] Cp. Shadworth Hodgson's Introduction to James Hinton's *Chapters on the Art of Thinking*. On p. 9 Mr. Hodgson writes: "Coleridge ascribed to it (reason) a vision of concrete truths, the substance or matter of which received for him its whole value, not, as it did for Schelling, from its enlightening the intellect so much as from its power of touching the heart."

must be capable of vindication by reason. It must be intelligible. There can be no rigid divorce between faith and reason. A faith which cannot be placed upon a rational basis is a faith unworthy of a being like man. Yet Coleridge readily allows that spiritual truth cannot be completely rationalised. *Omnia exeunt in mysteria.* Christian doctrine is full of mysteries. Divine truth is larger than the measure of the human mind. The unknown surrounds us on every side; but the unknown is not necessarily the unknowable. With a ripening knowledge and experience the unknown may progressively become the known. Reason stultifies its very existence if it sets up absolutely impassable barriers in the way of its own advance.

We see at once the difference between Kant and Coleridge in this matter of the distinction between understanding and reason. For Kant the Ideas of the reason, God, Freedom, Immortality, were merely regulative ideas. They could never, that is, be the objects of knowledge; could never form part of a system of rationalised experience. We were compelled by our moral constitution to postulate their existence, but we could never prove that they were or were not. They floated above us as a beautiful vision which we could never speculatively grasp. But for Coleridge they were real, and we could grasp them. Reason, as above described, was the instrument of apprehension. Spiritual experience could be reasonably referred to an objective basis upon which it reposed. It was just in the realm of our common moral and religious experience that we came into living contact with the supersensible realities of the spiritual world. Both Kant and Coleridge agree that the understanding, which is reason in its narrower and purely intellectual aspect, could not lay hold of supersensible truth; but while Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* leaves us face to face with agnosticism, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* offers us a faith which cannot be intellectually justified, Coleridge provides us with a reasonable faith. Kant had to fit the realities of moral and religious experience into a logical framework which was too cramped to contain them. Coleridge, unhampered by Kant's technical difficulties or his peculiar philosophical inheritance from the past, boldly took his stand upon spiritual experience, claimed it as real and trustworthy, and sought to interpret it in its concrete bearing upon life.

(5) At the basis of Coleridge's view of reason lay his conviction that man is capable of holding living communion with God. It was the absence of this conviction which, in his opinion, made deism a creed as cold and cheerless as atheism.[1] And such communion is possible, because man is a sharer in the divine nature. "Whenever by self-subjection to this universal light, the will of the individual, the particular will, has become a will of reason, the man is regenerate: and reason is then the spirit of the regenerated man, whereby the person is capable of a quickening intercommunion with the Divine Spirit."[2]

"Reason," he writes, "cannot in strict language be called a faculty, much less a personal property, of any human mind. He, with whom it is present, can as little appropriate it, whether totally or by partition, as he can claim ownership in the breathing air or make an inclosure in the cope of heaven."[3]

Personality is one of the cardinal conceptions of Coleridge's creed, but with a narrow individualism he will have nothing to do. The philosophy of empiricism, brought to its logical conclusion by Hume, led directly to agnosticism, because it demonstrated the impossibility of passing outside the circle of one's own ideas and feelings. But in the distinction of reason and understanding Coleridge found what he was looking for. He found assurance that man could escape from the narrow prison of his own individuality, for he was sharer in a divine nature of which all men were partakers. When Kant spoke of reason or understanding he was thinking of them in the abstract. He approached his problem as a logician, and was concerned to analyse the structure of knowledge without regard to its living development in a human mind. He found that knowledge was possible only if you granted that mind made universally certain contributions to the finished result. But this universal activity of mind, the fact that all men share in a common mental outlook, did not mean for Kant that a divine reason was operative in all human minds. Later idealism took this further step, and identified Kant's abstract mind with the reason of God, and spoke of the immanence of the divine reason in the human consciousness. Coleridge, however, unquestionably

[1] *Aids*, p. 57. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[3] *The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix B, p. 266.

did think of God, living and active, as the indwelling life and light of every human personality. He pictured man as a sharer in the divine nature. His very capacity for seeing the light was itself the presence of the light, illuminating his whole being.[1] Coleridge, therefore, could draw no hard and fast distinction between natural and revealed religion. Whatever truth any religion contained came by revelation, for in varying degree the light of God was illuminating every soul. We shall see how this doctrine of man's participation in the divine nature became central in the teaching of Maurice.

Can Coleridge be fairly called a pantheist? It is easy to find passages in his writings where the language is vague, and seems to suggest that the supreme reason is impersonal, and reaches personality only in ourselves.[2] But the charge surely fails, if we pay regard to the general spirit of his teaching. No pantheist could have written, as Coleridge has written, about human freedom and sin. Whatever may be the explanation of moral evil, its source is not for Coleridge, as it must be for the pantheist, in God. No pantheist, again, could have criticised so adversely the growing tendency to think of God, not in His personal attributes, but in His "so-called physical attributes . . . the attributes of space with a notion of power as their *substratum*—a Fate, in short, not a moral Creator and Governor."[3] To reduce God to a mere *anima mundi*, to say that God is everything—*Jupiter est quodcunque vides*—is to transform completely the doctrine of the divine omnipresence. Rightly regarded, that doctrine emphasizes the truth that all

[1] Cp. the note, p. 265, of the same work. "In its highest sense, and which is the ground and source of the rest, reason is being, the Supreme Being contemplated objectively, and in abstraction from personality. The Word or Logos is life, and communicates life; is light, and communicates light. Now this light contemplated *in abstracto* is reason. . . . The second sense comes when we speak of ourselves as possessing reason; and this we can no otherwise define than as the capability with which God has endowed man of beholding, or being conscious of, the divine light. But this very capability is itself that light, not as the divine light, but as the life or indwelling of the living Word, which is our light; that is, a life whereby we are capable of the light and by which the light is present to us, as a being which we may call ours, but which I cannot call mine: for it is the life that we individualise, while the light, as its correlative opposite, remains universal."

[2] *E.g.* the opening words of the quotation in the note above.

[3] *Aids*, p. 338.

things are always present to God. It must not be charged with the very different teaching that all things are God.[1] If pantheism is Coleridge's creed, the entire argument in the *Aids* from conscience and spiritual experience becomes meaningless. Human personality is for Coleridge so important, just because it reflects the innermost nature of God, though he is well aware of the dangers of anthropomorphism. He is firmly convinced, as we have seen, that God speaks directly to the soul of man, and he cannot abandon trust in his spiritual intuitions, without abandoning all that he counts most sacred. But then this supersensible reality cannot be less than personal. If man possesses will, reason, self-consciousness, God must possess them too, though in superior degree, and without the limitations incident to human personality. Pantheism, however, is incompatible with a belief in a divine personal will.[2] Again, Coleridge finds in the material universe proof of the divine personality. Nature is the robe of God. In its symbolism he reads a divine message, and he wrote his account of the imagination to show how it was that there existed this sympathetic association between the natural symbol and the mind which interprets it. The only explanation was, that underlying both Nature and mind was some spiritual principle which expressed itself in both. But, if this was so, then the spiritual principle must partake of the nature of the mind which was its instrument of self-revelation. It must itself be personal. Impersonal mind conveys no meaning to our intelligence. "The fact, therefore, that the mind of man in its primary and constituent forms represents the laws of nature, is a mystery which of itself should suffice to make us religious: for it is a problem, of which God is the only solution, God, the one before all, and of all, and through all." [3]

[1] *Aids*, pp. 336–8.

[2] For further proof that Coleridge was not a pantheist, see Note G, at the end of this chapter.

[3] *The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix B, p. 273. Hort in his essay raises an interesting question, whether Coleridge's reason and imagination are different faculties, or the same faculty exercised on distinct classes of objects. Coleridge does not identify them. But there can be little doubt that, if he had set out to construct a formal system of philosophy, he would have treated them as springing from the same root, as being distinguishable functions of one undivided personality.

Enough, perhaps, has been said to enable us to estimate the kind of influence which Coleridge exercised upon the religious thought of his time. Of one side of that influence, his achievement in the field of Biblical criticism, I have already written.[1] What he did there was, first, to show that the Bible must be studied as you would study any other book, and, secondly, to insist that the revelation embodied in it must be brought into conformity with the revelation which each man carries within himself in the movement of his whole moral and spiritual nature. Of his work as a pioneer in this department of theological study it is difficult to speak too highly. But Coleridge was in no sense a technical theologian; he was rather an interpreter of spiritual life, in the largest meaning of that term. His theology and philosophy are intimately bound up together, and melt into each other. English theology, with obvious detriment to itself, showed, in the first half of the nineteenth century, no such alliance with philosophy as obtained in Germany. Coleridge, by bringing the two disciplines into living relation, helped to free theology of some of its narrowness, and to deepen and enlarge the spiritual outlook of his age. He directed attention to those borderland problems which lay on the confines of theology, psychology, and metaphysics, problems connected with the relation of the human spirit to God. He initiated, again, an intellectual movement in religion. Such a movement was sorely needed. The Deistic controversy was dead. The Evangelicals, as we have seen, were uninterested in intellectual problems, and even the spiritual fervour of the school had lost something of its original fire. By becoming fashionable Evangelicalism was hardening into traditionalism. Paley's apologetics, though they appealed to a wide circle, were of a surface character, and his ethics were frankly utilitarian. At Paley Coleridge hit hard.[2] "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it; rouse him if you can to the self-knowledge of his need of it; and you may safely trust it to its own evidence."[3] Coleridge saw plainly enough that Paley's argument from final causes needed an entire reconstruction, and that the advent of Biblical criticism seriously affected his defence of the credibility of Christianity. But it

[1] Cp. ch. x. [2] *Aids*, p. 341. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

was his utilitarianism which most roused his anger. One of the objects, he tells us, with which he wrote the *Aids to Reflection*, was to establish the difference between prudence and morality, and to show that moral goodness is something higher than any principle of expediency.[1] The alliance effected by the Christian theologian between Christianity and the prevailing utilitarianism, though it might provide the preacher with weapons for threat and exhortation, was an unholy alliance. Hope of future reward and fear of future punishment are not moral motives. Utilitarianism, as taught by Bentham and George Grote, and to a less extent by James Mill, was anti-religious. The prevailing theology was credited by these writers, and in particular by Bentham, with the responsibility for most of the social evils which they were so eager to cure. It was, then, not unnatural that the religious public of the day regarded utilitarianism as a godless philosophy. Coleridge raised the dispute to a higher level. By interpreting man's spiritual nature in larger terms, he not only cut the ground from under the sensationalism which lay at the core of the utilitarian creed, but also lifted orthodox apologetics into an ampler region, and made possible an alliance between theology and a spiritual philosophy which should bear fruit for many a year to come.[2] It is, then, as the prophet of wider spiritual vision that we are to judge of Coleridge.

His apology for Christianity centres round two leading thoughts; first, that Christ came "not to destroy, but to fulfil"; second, that he who would understand the true meaning of religion must admit the existence in man of spiritual depths, which never have been, and perhaps never can be, fully explored. With regard to the former, Coleridge was filled with a sense of the breadth and universality of Christianity. It was the crown of all other religions, because it fulfilled their imperfect strivings and aspirations. They were "broken gleams"; it was the perfect light. Whatever was true or vital in them was taken up by, and lived in, the larger truth of Christianity.

[1] *Aids*, Preface, p. xv.

[2] Mill in his essay on Coleridge points out how the existing state of religion and theology in England inevitably called into being two classes of reformers; on the one hand, those, like Bentham, who wished to abolish theology altogether; on the other hand, those, like Coleridge, who wished to rebuild it on deeper foundations.—*Dissertations*, vol. i. pp. 436–7.

In Christ, again, all human activities might find their consecration, for the spirit of Christianity could leaven the whole of life. Christianity, as we have seen, was not so conceived when Coleridge wrote. The Evangelicals viewed art, literature, and philosophy with suspicion; and, being without any philosophy of history, thought of Christianity rather as a sudden introduction into human affairs than as the fulfilment, natural and supernatural, of antecedent spiritual movements. The "high and dry" churchmen of the day similarly failed to see how Christianity stood in living relationship with the whole of human life and thought. Coleridge made Christianity live, not only as a perfect way of life, but as the perfect truth, the supreme and satisfying philosophy. He vitalised the dead bones of religion, and made theology once more a living and progressive science. It was a great achievement, whose results have been abiding. Are we not ourselves to-day, aided by the conception of development, moving on the apologetic lines which Coleridge laid down?

Coleridge's second great thought is that man's spirit has about it mysterious and unfathomable depths. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." This mystery had its human and divine aspects. Freedom, conscience, sinfulness—an analysis of man's constitution revealed these as ultimate constituents, incapable of explanation or resolution into something else. In its divine aspect the mystery deepened. Man reached out after, and found, God. In ways incomprehensible by us God was ever acting on the human spirit. And man, in some sort, shared the life of God, for reason was the divine light dwelling in man. Religion, then, was no superstition or priestly artifice; it was the yearning of the soul, met by the divine self-impartation. Christianity not only gave expression to man's deep-seated need of God, but also showed how God had met that need in ways so profound that experience could never exhaust their meaning. But if the revelation was to be understood, Christianity must be lived. No mere arguing about it would prove its credibility. Only in the school of spiritual experience could the required proof be found. Consequently, when Coleridge discusses the special doctrines of Christianity,

the Atonement, the Trinity, and Original Sin, he treats of them mainly in their practical bearing. Thus of the Atonement he says that it is enough that it meets our deepest needs. The God-ward aspect of the fact is of necessity hidden from us; but our inability speculatively to determine the place which the Atonement occupies in the life of God is no adequate reason for rejecting the doctrine.[1] Similarly with regard to Original Sin, about which Coleridge writes at some length, defending its true meaning against the perversions with which theology has overlaid it. Speculatively considered, the doctrine is inexplicable. The perversion of a moral will is an insoluble mystery. No beginning of the process of perversion can be pictured. It must be referred, as Kant referred it, to a timeless act of the will, which is equivalent to a confession that the mystery hopelessly baffles us.[2] But the fact of original sin, of moral evil, that is, which is original in the sense that it has its origin in the will (this for Coleridge is the only intelligible meaning of the term), is something of which we are all conscious. It were wiser, then, to give up speculation upon a problem which we can never hope to solve, and to concern ourselves with the sin which is in each of us, and with the remedy for it which Christianity provides.[3] The doctrine of the Trinity is likewise viewed in its practical aspect. That which determines belief in the doctrine is the fact of Christ's redeeming work. For how, asks Coleridge, could He be a Redeemer if He were not divine? And if He is divine, that fact necessitates a belief in the Trinity, for otherwise there would be a breach in the unity of the Godhead.[4] At the same time, Coleridge does attempt a speculative defence of the doctrine; and it is important to mention this, because he has been charged with abandoning altogether the use of the speculative reason in theology. He writes, however, that "previously to the promulgation of the Gospel the doctrine had no claim on the faith of mankind; though it might have been a legitimate contemplation for a speculative philosopher, a theorem in metaphysics valid in the Schools."[5] Our reasons,

[1] *Aids*, pp. 202–3, 235, 256, 263.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 232.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7.
[5] *Aids*, p. 131. Cp. the following passage in the *Biographia Literaria*, vol. i. pp. 136–7:—"These principles I held, *philosophically*, while in respect of revealed religion I remained a zealous Unitarian. I considered the *idea* of the Trinity a fair scholastic inference from the being of God as a creative intelligence; and

that is, for accepting the doctrine have been profoundly altered owing to the fact of the redemption wrought by Christ.[1]

The closest disciple of Coleridge was Maurice, of whom the next chapter treats. But his influence can be traced all down the century, and more immediately in those who are called Broad Churchmen, such as Arnold or Robertson. Broad Church is a vague enough term, and may include minds of very different moulds. But the school of more liberal theologians, which was to arise when the Oxford Movement had passed its zenith, was characterised by the spirit of free inquiry in theology, by a ready acceptance of the results of Biblical criticism, and by the desire to separate the kernel from the traditional husk of Christianity. All its members possessed that wider spiritual outlook which was the chief quality of Coleridge's mind.

NOTE F

The Distinction between "Speculative" and "Practical" Reason.

Coleridge, it must be admitted, has not altogether clearly expressed himself in the matter of this distinction. In the *Aids* he writes [2]:— "Hence arises a distinction in reason itself, derived from the different mode of applying it, and from the objects to which it is directed: accordingly as we consider one and the same gift, now as the ground of formal principles, and now as the origin of ideas. Contemplated distinctively in reference to formal (or abstract) truth, it is the Speculative Reason: but in reference to actual (or moral) truth, as the fountain of ideas and the light of the conscience, we name it the Practical Reason." In Appendix A of the same work he writes:—

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that it was therefore entitled to the rank of an *esoteric* doctrine of natural religion. But seeing in the same no practical or moral bearing, I confined it to the schools of philosophy. The admission of the Logos, as *hypostasized* (*i.e.* neither a mere attribute, or a personification) in no respect removed my doubts concerning the incarnation and the redemption by the cross; which I could neither reconcile *in reason* with the impassiveness of the Divine Being, nor in my moral feelings with the sacred distinction between things and persons, the vicarious payment of a debt and the vicarious expiation of guilt. A more thorough revolution in my philosophic principles, and a deeper insight into my own heart, were yet wanting. Nevertheless, I cannot doubt, that the difference of my metaphysical notions from those of Unitarians in general contributed to my final reconversion to the whole truth in Christ."

[1] Cp. Note H at the end of this chapter.

[2] P. 168.

"Now reason is considered either in relation to the will and moral being, when it is termed the practical reason = A: or relatively to the intellective and sciential faculties, when it is termed theoretic or speculative reason = *a*." And then follows this note: — "The Practical Reason alone is reason in the full and substantive sense. It is Reason in its own sphere of perfect freedom; as the source of ideas, which ideas, in their conversion to the reponsible will, become ultimate ends. On the other hand, Theoretic Reason, as the ground of the universal and absolute in all logical conclusion, is rather the light of reason in the Understanding, and known to be such by its contrast with the contingency and particularity which characterise all the proper and indigenous growths of the Understanding."

One more passage is of importance.[1] "Do I then utterly exclude the speculative reason from theology? No! It is its office and rightful privilege to determine on the negative truth of whatever we are required to believe. This doctrine must not contradict any universal principle: for this would be a doctrine that contradicted itself. Or philosophy? No. It may be and has been the servant and pioneer of faith by convincing the mind that a doctrine is cogitable, that the soul can present the idea to itself; and that if we determine to contemplate, or think of, the subject at all, so and in no other form can this be effected."

It would seem from these passages that speculative reason is something very inferior to practical reason, that it is discursive, and partakes rather of the nature of the understanding, while practical reason is primary and intuitive. Further, the rôle assigned to speculative reason in theology, that of determining "on the negative truth of whatever we are required to believe," is one so subordinate as to lend colour to the charge that Coleridge abandons the use of the critical faculty in theology, and relies merely on the instincts and intuitions of the heart. Such a charge, however, is hardly justified. For in speaking of the doctrine of the Trinity he argues that the notion of God involves that of a Trinity. "The Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead would have been a necessary idea of my speculative reason. God must have had co-eternally an adequate idea of Himself in and through which He created all things. But this would have been a mere speculative idea. *Solely in consequence of our redemption* does the Trinity become a doctrine, the belief of which as real is commanded by conscience."[2]

Hort in his essay discusses Coleridge's use of the term "specu-

[1] *Aids*, p. 141.

[2] *Literary Remains*, vol. i. pp. 393–4.

lative reason," and comes, rightly as I venture to think, to the conclusion that he does not, as a general rule, distinguish between the two aspects of reason; but is concerned rather to oppose reason to understanding, emphasizing, while he does so, its "practical" aspect. As so opposed, reason is shown to be the organ for apprehending intuitively truth as a whole, and not merely moral truth." [1]

NOTE G

A further refutation of the charge of pantheism is to be found in Coleridge's attitude toward Schelling. In the *Biographia Literaria* he tells us how he was greatly helped by Schelling's *Natur-Philosophie* and *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus;* how he found there "a genial coincidence" with much which he had worked out independently for himself.[2] He praises Schelling as one to whom we owed the completion of the triumph in philosophy of the dynamic over the mechanical system. Yet in a note in the margin of a later edition of the *Biographia* we read:—"The more I reflect, the more I am convinced of the gross materialism which underlies the whole system." [3] The explanation of this contradiction is probably this, that Coleridge at first fastened enthusiastically upon Schelling's theory of the imagination, seeing in it a confirmation of his own views as to the place of imagination in poetical construction; but later, when he began to investigate more carefully the metaphysical basis of Schelling's system, found that it was not compatible with the views about man's spiritual nature which he himself held with such conviction. Schelling's first principle, or Absolute, at any rate as expounded in his earlier writings, was not only impersonal, but was a pure logical abstraction, and was therefore incapable of satisfying man's spiritual needs.

NOTE H

The orthodoxy of Coleridge's Trinitarianism may fairly be called in question. He has frequently been charged in this matter with Neo-Platonism.[4] Rigg, for example, says of him: "His Unitarianism in fact, in later days, merely passed into a Neo-Platonised Sabellianism." [5] And again: "In the Alexandrian philosophical Tri-unity

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 321–2. With this opinion Pfleiderer agrees; cp. *The Development of Theology*, p. 309.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 102–4.

[3] Cp. the note in Shawcross, vol. i. p. 248, and section vi. of his Introduction.

[4] Cp. Benn, *op. cit.* vol. i. ch. vi.

[5] *Modern Anglican Theology*, by J. H. Rigg, 1857, p. 7.

he thought he had found the *nexus* between the philosophy of Schelling and the theology of St. John," it being the great aim of his later life to harmonise Schelling with St. John and St. Paul.[1] But the result of his supposed reconciliation is merely to invest abstractions with the names and personal attributes of the Christian Trinity. Thus the relation of Father to Son is made equivalent to that of Mind to Idea, and the relation of Spirit to both is reduced to the relation of Action to Being and Knowledge. It is a characteristic, says Rigg, of all Coleridge's theology to make the intuition of ideal truth identical with the spiritual communion of God with man.[2] Now it must be admitted that not a little of Coleridge's language lends colour to these charges. On the other hand, we have seen reason to believe that he was not at heart a pantheist, and this should make us hesitate before branding him as a Neo-Platonist. We have also his own assertion at the close of his life that he accepted all the doctrines of Christianity. We have seen, too, how he was chiefly concerned to present Christian doctrine in its practical aspect. There is no reason to question the sincerity of the account of his own mental and spiritual progress which he gives in the *Biographia Literaria*. "A more thorough revolution in my philosophic principles, and a deeper insight into my own heart, were yet wanting." With the advent of this double change came his "final re-conversion to the whole truth in Christ."[3] Any speculative vindication of such a doctrine as that of the Trinity must always be incomplete, and must fail to do justice to the fullness of moral truth which the doctrine enshrines. Any speculative failure on Coleridge's part is more than compensated by his insight into the spiritual depths of Christianity.

[1] Rigg, *Modern Anglican Theology*, p. 10. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[3] Vol. i. pp. 136–7.

CHAPTER XVIII

HARE—MAURICE—ERSKINE—CARLYLE

Four thinkers are to engage our attention in this chapter. Two of them, Hare and Maurice, have acknowledged their debt to Coleridge.[1] They are markedly his disciples, and reproduce in their writings many of his most characteristic thoughts. The third, Erskine, also helped to shape Maurice's theological opinions, and finds his appropriate place in the movement which we are now considering. To these may fairly be added Carlyle, as one who, like Hare and Maurice, had felt the influence of German idealism, and sought to find a philosophy of life more satisfying to the deepest needs of the human spirit than anything which empiricism or utilitarianism could provide.

In the previous chapter I called this movement philosophical, but it can be so named only with qualifications. None of the members of the group produced an organised system of speculative theology after the fashion of the German idealists. Coleridge might have done so, if his genius had been less spasmodic in its operation. But the aim of the four men whom we are here discussing was avowedly practical. Hare and Maurice were ministers of the Church of England, concerned, as is every Christian minister, to show the reasonableness and power of Christianity as a regenerating influence in human life. Erskine, a layman, was an apologist for spiritual religion, and for the claims of religious experience. Carlyle, while he was unable to make the same appeal to Christianity, had the practical purpose of the prophet. He wished to deliver a message which, by stirring the conscience, should lift to a higher level the lives of those who would listen to him.

[1] Cp. Preface to vol. i. of Hare's *The Mission of the Comforter*, 2 vols. (1846), and the *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. i. pp. 176–8. (The references are to fourth edition.)

Yet the movement may be called philosophical, because the ideas which inspired it were in large part derived from German philosophy, and because all the writers named were specially interested in determining the value and significance of the deepest utterances and aspirations of the human consciousness. It had philosophical depth, even if it did not embody itself in a philosophical system. If we want a motto for the movement, we may find it in the words of Koheleth—"Also he hath set eternity in their heart."[1]

Julius Charles Hare (1795–1855) was one of the few English theologians of the time who possessed any knowledge of the German language or German thought. Together with Thirlwall he helped to translate into English Niebuhr's *History of Rome*. From early days he had been a student of German philosophy, finding in idealism a welcome corrective of the shallow empiricism prevalent in England.[2] He belonged to no definite party in the Church, though he had many affinities with the Evangelicals. He parted, however, from them entirely in his view of inspiration, and in his interpretation of the doctrines of the atonement and justification by faith. Theories of satisfaction or expiation he rejected, regarding Jewish sacrifices as typical, not of penal suffering, but of the sacrifice of the carnal will to God, of which Christ's death upon the cross was the supreme example. Faith he held to be no particular exercise of trust in the merits of Christ's death, but something altogether larger, a habit gradually acquired, a growing confidence in and gratitude toward God for His love shown in the life and death of Christ. He was a strong opponent of Tractarianism, with its excessive insistence upon the virtue of the sacraments, its rigid doctrine of apostolical succession, and its appeal to a dead past which could never be fruitfully revived in a developing present. "Even the swallow's twitter," he writes, "and the sparrow's chirp are pleasanter than the first notes of the mocking-bird."[3] Clear-cut dogma was, perhaps, hardly to his liking. Not that he can be charged with mistiness in theological belief; but he saw that divine truth was larger than the human interpretation of it. He was repelled

[1] Eccles. iii. 11, marginal reading.

[2] Cp. "The Law of Self-Sacrifice" in *The Victory of Faith, and other Sermons.*

[3] *The Mission of the Comforter*, vol. i.; Preface, p. ix.

by the divisions of theological opinion which separated Christians, and, like Maurice, preferred to emphasize the underlying grounds of agreement between them. In Church politics Hare was a liberal. He pleaded for the revival of Convocation, and wished to give the laity more power in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. He was an acute critic, with a capacity for discriminating judgment,[1] and exercised no little influence upon his contemporaries. A man of refined and cultivated tastes, he brought to bear upon all theological questions both knowledge and a broad sympathy with varied forms of culture. The leading principles of his thought may be summed up under the three following heads:

(*a*) The distinction between reason and understanding, emphasized by Coleridge, was one of which he thoroughly approved, though he seems to have accepted it, before the *Aids to Reflection* was published, as a result of his independent study of Kant. The organ of spiritual apprehension, he insists, is the whole man. Reason in its largest and truest meaning stands for the organic unity of the personality. "Every genuine act of Faith is the act of the whole man, not of his Understanding alone, not of his Affections alone, not of his Will alone, but of all three in their central aboriginal unity. It proceeds from the inmost depths of the soul, from beyond that firmament of consciousness, whereby the waters under the firmament are divided from the waters above the firmament. It is the act of that living principle which constitutes each man's individual, continuous, immortal personality."[2] We can trace throughout his writings his interest in those borderland problems of psychology and theology which attracted Coleridge, in that region of the blending of human with divine, where deep answers to deep, which the sensationalist philosopher with his meagre equipment was unable to explore.

(*b*) Again, Hare constantly pleads for the necessity of fresh dogmatic formulation of Christian truth. New wine cannot be put into old wine-skins. Many of the struggles in the Church, he points out, have been due just to this fact, that,

[1] Proof of this assertion is to be found in the volume entitled *Miscellaneous Pamphlets on some of the Leading Questions agitated in the Church during the Last Ten Years* (1855).

[2] *The Victory of Faith*, pp. 37–8.

while knowledge was growing, attempts were made to perpetuate forms of doctrine which belong to earlier epochs of belief.[1] Men have identified divine truth with their own particular dogmatic system, "and have been ready to cry out *Crucify him* against everyone who ventured to question that system."[2] In the Bible, he reminds us, truth is set forth, not in a formal creed which is for ever to bind men's thoughts, but by living examples, and in the shape of principles, capable of progressive and diverse formulation.[3] "A living Faith seeks unity, which implies diversity, and manifests itself therein: whereas a notional Faith imposes and exacts uniformity, without which it has no ground to stand on."[4]

(*c*) Thirdly, Hare saw in the Person of Christ the fulfilment of all earlier religious aspirations. Christian truth raised all other religious truths to higher power. He felt that the great task which in his day lay before theology was to establish the divine Personality of Christ as the living centre of a living religion. It was not only the denials of a Strauss which had to be met, but the views of those who regarded Christ only as the founder of a system, whether moral, religious, or philosophical. Founders of systems stand outside their creations. Christ is Himself the truth which He proclaimed; and just because truth is personalised in Him, it can never be reduced to a system of formulas. Hare's whole theology is essentially Johannine in colour.

The ordinary reader will never find the theological writings of Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872) easy of comprehension, though Martineau wrote of him "that for consistency and completeness of thought, and precision in the use of language, it would be difficult to find his superior among living theologians."[5] This is due to the fact that the cast of his mind was essentially metaphysical. Truth, which we figure to ourselves under the form of images or pictures, he preferred to view *sub specie aeternitatis*.[6] Thus, while he did not deny, as some of his critics wrongly maintained, that the redemptive

[1] *The Victory of Faith*, pp. 61–2. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 312.
[3] *The Mission of the Comforter*, vol. ii., notes, p. 414.
[4] *The Victory of Faith*, p. 74.
[5] *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, vol. i. p. 258.
[6] Cp. Martineau, *loc. cit.*

work of Christ was a historical fact, and took place at a definite time on the field of history, he passed behind the temporal enactment, and viewed redemption as an eternal truth, as witnessing to a timeless relation between man and God. Similarly, in his interpretation of the phrases "eternal life," "eternal punishment," which cost him the loss of his theological professorship at King's College, London, he rejected the temporal meaning of eternal, as signifying endlessness, and emphasized its qualitative significance. Everywhere behind process in time he saw the ideas which gave meaning to the process, and tried to translate the former into terms of the latter. It is an attitude which has its dangers. It may lead to a measure of indifference to the results of critical and historical research, and to a habit on the part of the thinker of seeing in everything around him only the reflection of his own ideas. Maurice was not free from either of these faults.[1] He lacked the keen historical sense of a Whately; and the very intensity of his conviction of the truth of his own message tended to make him blind to the merits of other systems of Christian theology. But in saying this, we are only saying that in Maurice we have to do with a prophet, possessed of a vivid consciousness of eternal realities, and brimming with a message which at all costs he must deliver. For the prophet time is swallowed up in eternity, and the concrete fact of history becomes a symbol of an abiding reality behind it.

The fundamental principle of Maurice's theology is his belief in the nearness of God. The basis of his creed was the conviction that God was a Father, with whom men were in living communion. This truth he emphasized in two ways. First, he insisted that revelation was a fact. God had revealed Himself in the past, and was waiting to reveal Himself in the present. There was a sense in which Christ was the complete revelation; in another sense revelation was always going on. The reality of revelation was the presupposition of the existence of religion everywhere. Religion was man's movement toward God, only because it was also God's movement in man; and because it was this, the spiritual possibilities of humanity were immeasurable. Man might receive in an ever increasing measure the life of God in his soul. In the second

[1] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

place, Maurice, like Coleridge, insisted on the trustworthiness of spiritual experience. His eye was always upon the significance of what was best and deepest in human consciousness. In conscience, in remorse, in every call to men to "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things," he heard the divine voice, seeking by pleading and persuasion to redeem men from the sin which was selfishness. The satisfaction of human needs by Christ was for him an evidence of the truth of Christianity.[1] The accordance of Christianity with what was highest in man he never tires of emphasizing. He makes his appeal to the heart, to the inward witness of religion. Man therefore could find and know God, because God was revealing Himself within him. In contrast with Mansel's view, that revelation was a communication made to us by a God whose real nature we could not know, he urged that revelation "is the unveiling of a Person . . . not to the eye, but to the very man himself, to Conscience, Heart, Will, Reason, which God has created to know Him, and be like Him."[2] In all this Maurice was but transcribing his own experience. No man ever more lived out what he taught. The influence which he exercised was due at least as much to the contagion of his personality as to his teaching.

The truth of the nearness of the human to the divine received from Maurice its final consecration in the incarnation of Christ, which he regarded as the supreme example of the eternal fact of the union of God with man. But his assertion of God's essential oneness with humanity did not mean that he minimised the significance of the historical appearance of Jesus. On the contrary, he accepted wholeheartedly the Christology of the creeds; and his estimate of Christ marks him off decisively from all those who, with Strauss or Hegel, would deify humanity as a whole, and make incarnation a perpetual process in human history. He insisted, however, that the divine Logos had always been present in all men. The thought is so central in his theology that it is well to illustrate it with one or two quotations. "The

[1] Cp. *Life*, vol. i. pp. 132–3, where he instances the effect of Biblical doctrine upon his own inner life, as affording proof of its truth.

[2] *What is Revelation? A series of Sermons on the Epiphany* (1859) p. 54.

truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is, that he will not own the truth; he will not *act* as if this were *true*, he will not believe that which is the truth, that, except he were joined to Christ, he could not think, breathe, live a single hour."[1]

"The Son was really in Saul of Tarsus, and he only became Paul the converted when that Son was *revealed* in him."[2]

"Now, my dearest mother, you wish and long to believe yourself in Christ; but you are afraid to do so, because you think there is some experience that you are in Him necessary to warrant that belief. Now, if any man, or an angel from heaven, preach this doctrine to you, I say, let his doctrine be accursed."[3]

His quarrel with the Tractarians over the question of baptism turned on this point. Maurice regarded baptism as a declaration of the actual relation in which men stood to God. They were His children; baptism did not make them so. It involved no change of nature in the subject of it. Every human being was by right a son of God from the moment of his birth. What baptism did was to set the child within the circle of that light which had been always shining for all mankind, and was gradually to lead it into the fullness of truth.[4]

The Person of Christ was thus for Maurice the centre of his creed. Human life, he felt, had meaning only when it was viewed in and through Him. True unity among men, whether in the family, the nation, or the Church, could be reached only if the principle of association was found in Christ who was eternally the life and light of all men, the root and head of humanity.[5]

Maurice, in this matter of Christology, has been charged with Neo-Platonising, with treating Christ as an abstraction or an impersonal spiritual influence, and with minimising the historical character of His figure.[6] The accusation may have some grounds, if we single out certain expressions which are

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 155.
[2] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, Introd. p. xix (ed. 1893).
[3] *Life*, vol. i. p. 156.
[4] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 182 and 260.
[5] *Theological Essays*, p. 172 (5th ed.), and *Life*, vol. i. p. 214.
[6] *E.g.* by Rigg, *op. cit.*

to be found in his writings; but it cannot, I think, be sustained if we pay regard to his teaching as a whole, which is in essential accord with the prologue to St. John's Gospel.

In harmony with this belief about man's relation to Christ is his doctrine that redemption is an eternal fact or act, and not something achieved only at a definite point of time by the sacrifice on the cross. All men, he says, are eternally redeemed. They are but called on to recognise the fact, accept it, and live in the power of it. Maurice's view of the atonement was that Christ by sympathy identified Himself with sinners, shared in the miseries caused by sin, and so delivered men from sin, by teaching them to believe in the love of God. By the self-sacrifice of His Son God made known His eternal love for men; and Christ thus became a source of self-sacrificing love in man. "The giving up of His Son to take upon Him their flesh and blood, to enter into their sorrows, to feel and suffer their sins; that is, '*to be made sin*'; the perfect sympathy of the Son with His loving will towards His creatures, His entire sympathy with them, and union with them; His endurance, in His inmost heart and spirit, of that evil which He abhorred; this is God's method of reconciliation; by this He speaks to the sinful will of man; by this He redeems it, raises it, restores it."[1]

There followed also the denial that any system of theology could be true which started from the fallen nature of man, and brought in redemption as a subsequent remedy for the disorder. The redemptive relation was for Maurice fundamental. The Incarnation reveals, not a fallen, but a redeemed world.[2] The basal fact is man's eternal union with "the true sinless root of humanity"; and the union lies deeper than the severance which has been caused by sin.

Such teaching naturally provoked opposition, particularly from Evangelical theologians. Both Rigg and Candlish poured out the vials of their wrath upon Maurice.[3] Their criticisms, for the most part, reflect the orthodox, evangelical view which, starting from the Fall as the fundamental fact of human

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 192. Cp. also *Theological Essays*, p. 126.

[2] *Theological Essays*, p. 126.

[3] Rigg, *op. cit.* Candlish, *Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays*, 1854.

history, regarded Christ's death as a substitution, and a penal transaction which effected a change in the will of God towards men.[1] As illustrations of their criticism we may briefly refer to what they have to say upon Maurice's views of regeneration, justification, the nature of sin, and the idea of the Church.

Rigg finds in Maurice's account of justification nothing but a racial justification; not the entrance of the individual into a new state, but merely the recognition of a state which already exists. Candlish writes: "If the Gospel is to tell me, not that I must and that I may become what I am not—but only that I ought to know what I already am—then there can be no occasion for any radical renovation or revolution in my moral being. All that is needed is that I shall be informed and persuaded; not that I must be converted, created anew." [2]

Sin, in Maurice's teaching, they say, has no legislative or ethical connotation. It is not a crime calling for penalties; it implies no violation of a law. It is reduced to selfishness; and the sense of sin is interpreted as the loneliness of an unloving heart which finds itself confronted with eternal love.

The Church, again, for Maurice is no communion of individuals separated from the world by conversion. It is "the world opening its eyes to the light;" [3] "it is mankind become alive to the apprehension and realisation of the actual and universal redemption of humanity." [4] Throughout the *Theological Essays*, says Candlish, "there is a careful and consistent disavowal of anything being really done by God. The whole resolves itself into mere discovery on the part of God." [5] With this stricture Rigg agrees; but adds the further objection, that Maurice blurs the line which separates the divine from the human. He finds in Maurice's Neo-Platonism the source of all his errors.

Now much of this criticism rests on a sheer misunderstanding of Maurice's position. It is true that he flung himself with passionate ardour into the attack upon the traditional

[1] Maurice, however, though strongly opposed to the Evangelical method of presenting Christian truth, admits the validity of some of the conceptions dear to the hearts of his critics. See, for example, what he says about the Cross as an exhibition of the wrath of God against sin (*Theological Essays*, p. 121), and about the Atonement as a transaction (*ibid.*, p. 126).

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

[3] Rigg, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[4] Candlish, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–5.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

systems of theology current in his day, but it was not because he denied the historical facts of Christianity embodied in the creeds. No one was a firmer believer in them than he. But he felt, as Hare did, that the revelation of God in Christ was something far richer and deeper than any theological interpretation of it; and that most of the divisions among Christians arose from an insistence upon points of doctrinal difference, the constructions of the human intellect being set above the eternal facts of revelation. Maurice was always seeking for some ground of unity beneath the differences which separated Christians. He hoped to find it in the conciliation of what was positive in the belief of all the Churches, and in the rejection of what was negative.[1] He thought that he could help in the production of this unity, by drawing men's attention away from the theologies to the facts of revelation of which the theologies were varying expressions; by emphasizing the eternal significance of the historical events in the drama of redemption; and, above all, by showing how a true centre and principle of unity could be found in Christ. But he never treated the historical happenings of Christ's life, the great facts of Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, as if they were merely ideas. Thus he writes, speaking in criticism of the Unitarians:—"They may glorify this or that material—this or that spiritual—notion and conception. I am bound to acknowledge a Son of God, who is the Lord of their spirits and souls and bodies as He is of mine, who took their nature as He did mine, who died upon the Cross for them as He did for me."[2]

With regard to Rigg's charge, that Maurice blurred the line dividing the divine from the human, two things may be said. On the one hand, there is no ground whatever for interpreting Maurice's thought of an eternal union of God and man as implying an apotheosis of humanity. In such teaching he could only see "a very extensive and very frightful idolatry."[3] Sons of God there always have been among men, but any deity we can reach by generalising from the high qualities which

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 166, 171–2, 258–9.

[2] *Theological Essays*, p. 128.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 83. Cp. the following sentence: "Instead of recognising an impassable chasm between the human and the divine, these became in their minds [in some Unitarians] utterly confounded."

these have in common can only be an abstraction, "which may be anything, everything, nothing."[1] The Logos in every man is not reduced by Maurice to an amalgam of the best elements in human nature. He is in men, only because they are first in Him.

On the other hand, it may be questioned whether Maurice always allows enough for the separateness and uniqueness of each human personality. As Martineau points out, Coleridge in the *Aids to Reflection*, before he unfolds his doctrine of the indwelling Logos, insists upon the fact of individual freedom and responsibility, insists, that is, that, though men may share in a common reason, yet as volitional beings each stands alone as a free centre of choice.[2] Maurice in his teaching as to the relation between man and God so emphasizes the love and goodwill of God, dwells so on its continuous operation in drawing humanity to itself, that he appears at times to make man nothing more than a passive recipient of a benefit. This, however, is only a fault of exposition. He was well aware of the power of the human will to resist the divine pleading. The passage in the second of the *Essays* dealing with the consciousness of sin proves that the line between the divine and the human is not really blurred:—"*I* did this act, *I* thought this thought; it was a wrong act, it was a wrong thought, and it was *mine*. The world about me took no account of it. I can resolve it into no habits or motives, or if I can, the analysis does not help me in the least. Whatever the habit was, I wore the habit; whatever the motive was, I was the mover."[3] The passage goes on:—"Anything is better than the presence of this dark self. I cannot bear to be dogged by that, night and day; to feel its presence when I am in company, and when I am alone; to hear its voice whispering to me,—'Whithersoever thou goest, I shall go. Thou wilt part with all things else, but not with me. . . .' This vision is more terrible than all which the fancy of priests has ever conjured up. He who has encountered it, is beginning to know what Sin is, as no words or definitions can teach it him. . . . The emancipation will not be complete till he is

[1] *Theological Essays*, p. 84.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 259.
[3] Page 19. Cp. also *Life*, vol. ii. p. 563.

able to say,—giving the words their full and natural meaning,—'Father, I have sinned against *Thee*.'"

One cannot help feeling how critics of the type of Rigg and Candlish failed utterly to understand Maurice. They criticise him from a point of view which he never shared, and they have no sympathy with his own point of view. Their attack accordingly misses the mark. It may be true that in certain details Maurice's theology neglects elements of Christian truth which are undoubtedly present in the apostolic writings; but to brand his teaching either as un-Christian, or as hopelessly vague and misty, is absurd. The very breadth of Christian truth would make one antecedently expect, what history proves to have been the case, that its theological expression would vary. Maurice's opposition to current systems of theology, with their love of clear-cut definition and precise formula, did not arise from the fact that his own thought was undogmatic. That he had large doctrinal sympathies must be allowed. That followed of necessity from his belief that in every man and in every religion the light of the universal Logos was shining. But no one was more dogmatic than he, and no one more passionately insisted that his own view was right. His was the dogmatism of firmly-grasped facts, not the dogmatism which rejoices in defining limits. Scripture is dogmatic, in that it asserts clearly great truths; but it asserts them as living principles, capable of differing intellectual embodiment. It was as living principles that Maurice sought to present the truths of Christianity. Of the historical facts of the religion he is sure. If at times he seems to move away from fact into the region of idea, that is because it was his object to find the eternal in and behind the historical.

In the Boyle Lectures for 1846, *The Religions of the World*, the most popular of his writings, Maurice deals with the relation of Christianity to other faiths. Rejecting rightly the view that the true nature of religion is to be found in the residuum remaining, when you have eliminated from each system what is peculiar to it, on the ground that such a procedure would leave you with a conception of religion utterly meagre and insufficient, he argues that in Christ alone is to be found the full truth of which all other systems are partial expressions. The true method, he argues, for the missionary to pursue, is to

point out to his hearer how in Christ is to be found the fulfilment of what exists in lower faiths only in germ. Now for the understanding of Maurice this is an important point. We have seen how, in his defence of Christianity, he appeals to the heart, and insists that man's whole nature is concerned in religion. If a man, he says in effect, will be true to the inward light in his soul, he will know that God is love, and that Christ is the supreme revelation of God. But my inward conviction can have no validity for another. How can I argue with him if he meets my assertion, that I find in Christ the light of life, with the counter-assertion that he fails to do so? How am I to justify the translation of an individual conviction about Christ into a creed universal in its application? Maurice tries to get over the difficulty by this doctrine of the *Christus Consummator*. There are in all men, he tells us, needs, aspirations, ideals, which look outward and upward to some fulfilment. Let each man faithfully "follow the gleam" within him, and it will lead him to Christ the light of the world. The Logos in each man is a source of progressive revelation. Honest search for truth will be rewarded. Maurice has been charged with turning a sentiment into a dogma, with accepting the Christology of the creeds, because he found an emotional satisfaction in Christ. But these lectures show that this was not his position. The creeds, as he points out, do possess a high value, in that they witness to the historical experience of the Christian community which has found Christ to be Way, Truth, and Life. But beneath the internal evidence of subjective religion lies the actual fact that in Christ God became incarnate. That fact of the Word being made flesh Maurice accepts without reserve. And the argument of the lectures is, that, while all religions are in their measure revelations from God, in one religion, and in one Person who stands at the centre of that religion, God has fully revealed Himself, so far as the limitations of human nature make such a self-revelation possible. In the Christology of the creeds is to be found the meaning of the universal presence of religion among men, and of its gradual development from less to more perfect forms.

The appeal to the heart, which is so prominent in Coleridge and Maurice, raises the problem, how far an inward conviction may be allowed to influence a judgment on a matter of his-

torical fact. None of us are without some bias or prejudice. It is impossible, I suppose, for one who is familiar with the whole story of Christianity, and for whom Christianity has proved itself a power of life, to approach, for example, the evidence for the truth of the story of the Resurrection as he would approach the problem of a date in Roman history in which he feels very little personal interest. No conviction or sentiment can, of course, be allowed to take the place of the most searching inquiry into the historicity of the facts recorded of Jesus; yet is it unreasonable, in the light of the total appeal and influence of Christianity, to say: "If on other grounds the claim of Christ appears to me to be true, that is in itself a predisposing argument in favour of the actual occurrence of His resurrection? Even if the historical evidence will not completely satisfy the canons of modern scientific criticism, since I find in it nothing which clearly disproves the story, may I not be allowed to attach some weight to the witness of the heart to Christ, a witness which the inner experience of others confirms, and on this larger ground accept the narrative as true?" I am not suggesting that Maurice had doubts as to the truth of the historical facts recorded in the creeds. On the contrary, as has been said, he accepted them as certain. But in his apology for Christianity he makes his appeal, not to logic or scientific evidence, but to the heart, to what is highest in man, and to the proved power of Christianity to lift human life to a new level.

Maurice was not a party man; the very idea of forming a party in the Church was abhorrent to him. With Evangelical theology, as we have seen, he found himself out of sympathy. He inveighs against those who would make faith dependent either on feeling or correctness of intellectual belief. Tractarianism in some of its aspects, perhaps, appealed to him more; but he opposed the views set forth by Pusey in his Tract on Baptism, had a conception of Church unity very different from that of Newman, and felt that the Tractarians laid too much emphasis on the details of religious practice. Can he be called, as he sometimes is, a Broad Churchman? Broad Church, as usually understood, stands for dislike of dogma and indefiniteness of belief. But Maurice was dogmatic to the core. The very thing he could least endure was the

spirit "which was ready to tolerate all opinions in theology."[1] "I do not know well," he writes, "what the Broad Church is. I always took it to be a fiction of Conybeare's. If it means anything, I suppose it is a representation, under different modifications, of that creed which is contained in Whately's books, or of that which has arisen at Oxford out of the reaction against Tractarianism."[2] The great disease of the age he deemed to be "that we talk about God and about our religion, and do not confess Him as a Living God; Himself the Redeemer of men in His Son; Himself the Inspirer of all right thoughts";[3] and Broad Churchmen, as he defined them, he thought to be more tainted with this disease than any other party in the Church.

Maurice was passionately attached to the Church of England. In *The Kingdom of Christ* he set out to show that only in that Church do you find the full representation and embodiment of the kingdom. Other Christian societies, he says, offer only a portion of the truth concerning Baptism, Holy Scripture, and the fundamental articles of the Creed. The Church of England teaches the whole truth in its fulness.

"I could wish to live and die for the assertion of this truth; that the Universal Church is just as much a reality as any particular nation is . . . that the Church is the witness for the true constitution of man as man, a child of God, an heir of heaven, and taking up his freedom by baptism: that the world is a miserable, accursed, rebellious order, which denies this foundation . . . that in the world there can be no communion; that in the Church there can be universal communion; communion in one body, by one Spirit. For this, our Church of England is now, as I think, the only firm, consistent witness. . . . I will hold fast by that Church which alone stands forth and upholds universal brotherhood, on the only basis on which brotherhood is possible."[4]

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 183.

[2] Conybeare had written an article on "Church Parties" in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1853, in which he spoke of Broad Church as a recognised party designation. Cp. note in Maurice's *Life*, vol. ii. p. 607; cp. also ii. pp. 358-9. With regard to his remark on Whately, it must be remembered that Whately was the author (though he never avowed it) of *Letters on the Church: By an Episcopalian*, in which a distinctly High Church view is maintained. But he modified his opinions in later life. Cp. ch. vi. of this volume.

[3] *Life*, vol. ii. p. 359.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 166.

We cannot, then, label Maurice with any conventional party label. We must be content to class him among the progressive theologians, and to see in him one who gave a welcome to new learning and knowledge, and was eager to infuse fresh life into theology by freeing it from the fetters of a barren orthodoxy. He can hardly be called a great theological thinker, but he may rightly be named a great spiritual force in his own generation. He supplied what his age needed, a powerful witness to the reality of the divine. For a while the Oxford Movement carried all before it, but the inevitable reaction began to set in after the secession to Rome of some of its most prominent leaders. There were many in the ten or fifteen years after 1845 whose sky was darkened by a cloud of scepticism.[1] It was a time which called for a teacher who should revive a waning faith. Maurice heard the challenge, and answered it, by proclaiming a divine Fatherhood and a living Christ, and by setting himself in practical ways to make Christ's kingdom upon earth more of a living reality. His interest in the principle of co-operation in industry, and in the education of the working classes, which led to the foundation of Queen's College, London, sprang directly out of his theological belief. The corollary of a living Redeemer, the head and root of humanity, was a growing kingdom on earth, ruled by Him, and inspired by His power.

Maurice, then, and with him we may associate Charles Kingsley, was a witness for the reality of the divine, and the dignity and spirituality of human life. The divine they saw everywhere; in nature, which, as Kingsley more especially taught, was the garment of God; in humanity which was the home of the indwelling Logos. Against materialism and scepticism they upheld a creed of Christian idealism; against a dead traditionalism in theology a living and growing faith, based on certain ultimate facts of revelation. Maurice, in particular, like Coleridge, fixed his attention upon the deepest elements of the religious consciousness, and saw in them evidence of the presence and activity of God. He was the interpreter of Christian experience. His teaching acted, as he intended it to act, as a solvent of much of the current theology. It was his deliberate purpose to free theology from its sectarian

[1] Cp. ch. xix., "The Negative Movement."

fetters. Beneath the divisions of the Churches he saw the deeper unities of Christian truth and life, the one Fatherhood of God, the one brotherhood of men, the summing up of all humanity in Christ. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" are the words which perhaps best describe his fundamental conviction.

Scotland, like England, was the scene of a theological awakening between 1820 and 1830, and in this movement the foremost figure is Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (1788–1870). He was an intimate friend of Carlyle and Maurice; and in the case of the latter exercised no little influence upon the formation of his theological opinions. Maurice more than once acknowledges his debt to Erskine. He speaks, for example, of *The Brazen Serpent* as having been "unspeakably comfortable" to him, and says that Erskine helped him to realise what a true gospel for humanity must be, how it could not rest upon human sinfulness and the Fall as its deepest foundation.[1] The volume, which was published in 1831, came out in time to help Maurice at a critical period in the formation of his religious beliefs, when he was disgusted with Calvinism, and was searching for some more satisfying creed. *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament* was dedicated to Erskine, and in a letter which accompanied the gift of the book Maurice wrote:—"I wished to tell others how much I believe they, as well as I, owe to your books; how they seem to me to mark a crisis in the theological movement of this time."[2] It is remarkable that two laymen, Erskine and Alexander Knox, should have so decisively influenced the course of theological development in these early years of the nineteenth century. Very different, indeed, was the thought of the two men; yet in one point they agree. Both had the cause of spiritual religion at heart, and vindicated the claim of the Christian consciousness. Knox, as we have seen, found fault with the orthodox churchmen of his time for neglecting "interior" religion.[3] Erskine insists that doctrine must be transmuted into character, and that Christian truth finds its surest evidence in the inner life of the soul.[4]

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 108 and 121.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 150.

[3] Cp. ch. v. of this volume.

[4] *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel* (1828), p. 79; cp. *Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion* (1820), p. 28.

The following brief summary of Erskine's teaching will show the similarity between his views and those of Maurice.

At the root of all his teaching lay his vivid apprehension of God as a living Being, continually acting upon the lives of men. "Our systems make God a mere bundle of doctrines, but He is the Great One, with whom we have to do in everything. . . . Religion is for the most part a covert atheism, and there is a general shrinking from anything like an indication that there is a real power and a real Being at work around us."[1] Erskine was entirely possessed by this consciousness of God. He was not interested in theological controversy or system-making, or in the historical evidences for Christianity; but he was profoundly interested in investigating the deep roots of the religious life, and in demonstrating the need for a living and growing faith. And because God was thus living and active, it followed that theology must be progressive. God, Erskine insisted, was continually educating mankind. The traditional forms which doctrine had taken were not final. The Christian consciousness was a growing thing, and would from time to time shape new doctrinal expressions for itself.

Christ was the head of the human race. This for Erskine was no metaphor, but a fact. He speaks of Christ as "the sustaining head, to the power of whose pervading presence through all the members of the human nature the actual existence of every individual of the race is alone to be attributed."[2] The clearest witness to this relationship is conscience. "The conscience in each man is the Christ in each man." "There is in each man a continual inflowing of the Logos. It is in virtue of Christ being in all men, that conscience is universal in man." Even more emphatic is the following:— "Christ came once, and was manifested eighteen hundred years ago; but both before and since that time He has been, as it were, diffused through humanity, lying at the bottom of every man as the basis of his being."[3]

With regard to the Atonement, Erskine insisted that God's

[1] *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*, p. 142.

[2] *The Brazen Serpent*, p. 42.

[3] This and the two previous quotations are recorded as sayings of Erskine by Principal Shairp in the memoir at the end of *Letters of Thomas Erskine*, edited by W. Hanna, vol. ii. pp. 353–4, 357.

forgiveness of the sinner is something already past and given. It in no way depends on anything which men have to do. We have not, so to speak, to buy off God by penances and sacrifices; nor is the pardon dependent on our belief in it. It is there already, an eternal fact. "You know that I consider the proclamation of pardon through the blood of Christ, as an act already past in favour of every human being, to be essentially the Gospel. . . . When it is supposed that the pardon is not passed into an act of favour of any individual until he believes it, no one can have peace from the Gospel until he is confident he is a believer; and further, his attention is entirely or chiefly directed to that quality of belief in himself, which entitles him to appropriate the pardon to himself, so that his joy is not in God's character but in his own." [1]

But pardon is not salvation. The pardon is given freely; the salvation depends on our acceptance of the pardon. Salvation means the renewed life of holiness which comes of living communion with the Holy Spirit, and this a man may reject. Erskine continually defends the doctrine of free pardon from any charge of antinomianism.[2]

Erskine's influence was far-reaching. Though theological controversy was not to his liking, and though he did not directly attack the traditional theology of his Church, yet the result of his work was to bring about a reinterpretation of the current orthodox doctrine. Particularly was this the case with regard to the doctrine of the Atonement. He was the inspirer of John McLeod Campbell, whose volume, *The Nature of the Atonement*, would probably have never seen the light if it had not been for Erskine's earlier writings on the subject.[3] All theories of substitution he discarded as unjust and inconsistent with the true nature of punishment for sin.[4] Eternal punishment, he taught, did not imply that the punishment was endless.[5] The authority of the Bible was not to be viewed as an external authority which we were to accept unquestioningly. The Bible had

[1] *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 167–8.

[2] *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*, p. 25.

[3] For Campbell, cp. ch. xx. of this volume.

[4] This is a large part of the message of *The Brazen Serpent*.

[5] Cp. *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 342, "He who waited so long for the formation of a piece of old red sandstone, will surely wait with much long-suffering for the perfecting of a human spirit."

authority because, and only in so far as, its teaching appealed to the light within us and agreed with it.[1] This appeal to internal evidence as the test of the truth of Christianity is central in Erskine's teaching. It is worth while to note in passing that this was the very test which Tractarianism condemned, on the ground that it made the human mind the arbiter of revelation.[2]

Pfleiderer compares the work of Erskine and Campbell in Scotland to that done in Germany by Kant and Schleiermacher.[3] In many respects the parallel is a true one. In both countries a reconstruction of Christian doctrine was in process, the keynote of which was the appeal to religious experience and to the ethical significance of dogma, to the inwardness of Christian truth, rather than to the historical forms in which that truth had been handed down from the past. The result of the movement showed itself in a general broadening of theological belief, in a desire to be quit of sectarianism and to find some more comprehensive basis for union, and in a determination to assert the rights of the individual consciousness in face of the claims of authority.

As in England the Oxford Movement was a temporary setback to the earlier liberalism of the Oriel school, so in Scotland a reaction followed Campbell's expulsion from the Church, after the controversy known as the Row Heresy. But the reaction was in neither case of long duration. The broader view prevailed, as indeed it was bound to do, since it had on its side the growing intellectual and spiritual forces which, we have seen, were to reshape the mind of the century.

It is perhaps true that, up to the publication in 1851 of his *Life of John Sterling*, Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was regarded as a religious teacher. But the marked sympathy which he showed in that volume with Sterling's doubts, and the negative tone of the whole book, changed the feeling of the religious public for its author. Carlyle, however, ranks primarily with the men of letters, not with the theologians. In the first place, his attitude to Christianity was in the main negative, if

[1] *The Doctrine of Election*, pp. 516–17.
[2] In Tract 73, as Tulloch points out—*op. cit.*, p. 176.
[3] *Development of Theology*, p. 382.

not positively hostile. In the second place, he had little power of appreciating a system of thought such as Christianity involves. His genius was essentially of the imaginative order. Gifted with great dramatic power and an insight into the meaning of historical movements, he was able to make moments or epochs of the past live again, and to clothe once more with flesh and blood its heroic figures. But for abstract thought he had little taste. Tulloch speaks of his hatred of tradition, and says that he lacked capacity for estimating the still-living power of past movements of thought, as embodied in institutions, liturgies, forms of worship, and the like. "The mere fact that they were no longer in their first freshness, but had become traditional, implied to him that they were dead, and that there was no more good in them." [1] I am not sure that this criticism is altogether just when we call to mind what Carlyle wrote in *Sartor Resartus:* "Beautiful it is to understand and know that a Thought did never yet die; that as thou, the originator thereof, hast gathered it, and created it from the whole past, so thou wilt transmit it to the whole future." Or again: "We inherit not Life only, but all the garniture and form of Life." [2] Would it not be truer to say that, while Carlyle recognised the necessity for some outward embodiment of the ever-expanding inward spirit and idea, he feared lest a temporary embodiment might come to be regarded as permanent and the growing infant be stifled in his long clothes? Past systems of thought still had for him vitality, but that vitality could only make itself fully felt if there was readiness to change the forms in which the inherited thought was presented. Continuity of life and idea he valued; but he saw the need of constant reconstruction of the outward shape in which the deposit of truth from the past was handed down to a changing present. Christian theology, he felt, had not undergone that reconstruction. When it came, it would, however, as he thought, sweep away the greater part of the Christian system.

Again, he was convinced that there could be no systematic construction of ultimate reality by human reason. That could be grasped only by way of intuition and symbol. To frame a theology, therefore, or to attempt an intellectual formulation of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 200.

[2] Bk. III. ch. vii., *Organic Filaments*, p. 170 (ed. 1893, Chapman & Hall).

the final object of devotion and worship, was to attempt the impossible. Symbols, on the other hand, had a value both for the imagination and the will, in quickening emotion and in stirring to action. The gospel of work and practical living could be preached and carried out without any aid from speculative theology.

Yet a place must be found for Carlyle in the development of English theological thought in the nineteenth century. He helped in more ways than one to broaden and vitalise theology, even though his influence was in the main indirect. In the first place, he did an important work in breaking down the insularity of the English mind by introducing it to the wider thought of Germany. In the second place, with an ethical fervour which reminds us of Fichte, he waged unceasing war against a materialistic and hedonistic creed. Thirdly, however unfair we may judge him to have been in his estimate of Christian theology, his warning against the tyranny of the dead hand of the past is surely one which theologians in all ages need to take to heart. His thought has distinct affinities with that of the writers discussed earlier in this chapter, though, as far as specifically Christian theology is concerned, while Maurice, Hare, and Erskine stand at the centre of the circle, Carlyle stands at the circumference.

The cardinal article of his creed is his intense belief in the reality of the unseen, spiritual world. This is the message of *Sartor Resartus*, his earliest prophetical utterance,[1] and from it he never departed. "All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, it is not there at all; matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea, and *body* it forth."[2] "The Universe is but one vast Symbol of God; nay if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God?"[3] Carlyle firmly believed in a living God, witnessed to by nature and conscience and the inner life of the soul. "The word is very nigh unto thee in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it."[4] From this fundamental thought two convictions followed: first, the sacredness of duty; second, the dignity of human life. The call to duty was God's voice in man; conscience was the link which bound

[1] Published in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833. Issued separately 1838.
[2] P. 49. [3] P. 152. [4] Deut. xxx. 14.

man to God. There existed an eternal order of morality which called for man's reverence and homage. Right was right, and to follow it was "wisdom in the scorn of consequence." God was no distant God, dwelling apart from the world. His presence could be traced in every heart, and in the working out of moral judgments in history. For Carlyle is never tired of asserting, with all the solemnity of a prophet, that God is continually enacting His judgments upon men. Despite appearances to the contrary, right is winning. Right must win, for it is the only true might. Again, the humblest life of human toil has a dignity, which belongs to it because of the essential divinity of human nature. Carlyle never forgot his early peasant home. His advocacy of social reform sprang from his desire for the removal of the obstacles which hindered the true development of men, who were made in the divine image. But his strong individualism led him to distrust democracy and democratic government. He questioned the capacity of the people to choose proper leaders, or to advance in political wisdom. This is one of the contradictions with which his life abounds. But his teaching about human nature, and his insight into its spiritual possibilities, was a welcome corrective of the shallow views of materialism and sensationalism. Hedonism he attacked vigorously. He could not call it an ethical creed, for it neglected the fundamental truth that the centre of man's life lay in God. "Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him." [1] Man, he cries, has in him something higher than love of happiness. He can do without happiness, if he can find Blessedness, or the inward peace which belongs to the will attuned to the moral order of the universe.[2]

The criticism which is often brought against Carlyle, that he taught the doctrine that might is right, is surely unsound. The essence of his whole creed is just the opposite. He never confused right and wrong, but regarded the distinction between them as eternal. If might won other than a temporary triumph, it was only because it was after all the right. Con-

[1] *Sartor*, p. 133.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 132. For an excellent estimate of Carlyle cp. Maccun's *Six Radical Thinkers.*

versely, what seemed to be failure was often the pledge of ultimate victory. Nothing in the universe which was of real moral value could permanently perish. "I tell thee again, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find here below: the just thing, the true thing. . . . If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded. . . . In all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the same. He has fought with all his might, and in exact proportion to all his right has he prevailed."[1]

What was Carlyle's view of God? We are told that he never threw off his inherited Calvinism, and conceived God in terms of force or bare will, never defining Him as a distinctively moral Being.[2] Carlyle never defined God at all, and any precise formulation of his theology is impossible. He loved to speak in vague language about Eternities and Immensities. But his conviction that there were moral judgments of God continually at work, that righteousness was the soul of the world, and that true blessedness lay in the loyalty of the human will to the eternal moral order, makes it clear, I think, that his conception of God was not merely that of force. It was not a conception which would satisfy the theist, much less the Christian theist, but it was an ethical conception. And it cannot be called an impersonal conception. God for Carlyle was more than a tendency making for right. He was a power, standing in moral relationship with individual men, holding in His hand the flaming sword of justice.[3] But though Carlyle thought of God as immanent in nature, and though he held firmly that each man carried a witness to God in his conscience, he tended to keep God apart from man. He may speak of "a Maker, voiceless, formless, within our own soul," but what is there in the soul is a reflection of God, rather than God Himself. Man is the creature at an infinite distance from the Creator. The Creator is task-master and judge, imposing upon a man a duty which, with all his efforts, he can barely carry out. It cannot be said of Carlyle's God that "in him is no darkness at all." We feel that He is remote in His majesty, terrible and sombre,

[1] *Past and Present*, pp. 10, 11 (ed. 1894, Chapman and Hall).
[2] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–5.
[3] Cp. *Carlyle*, by J. Nichol, in *English Men of Letters* series, p. 219.

making the thunder His voice, and using as His ministers "a flaming fire."

Carlyle liked to paint his pictures on a large scale. He idealised the hero, the forceful character. The essentially Christian virtues of meekness, humility, gentleness, did not attract him. Hence comes in part his opposition to Christianity. But that opposition has other sources. One has been already mentioned, his dislike of theological system. Another was his disbelief in miracle.[1] A creed of naturalism was abhorrent to him, but in what he called "natural supernaturalism" he found satisfaction. "Through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams."[2] All is miraculous or mysterious, but miracle, as Christian theology understands it, he emphatically disowns. To none of the ecclesiastical systems of his day could he give assent; but he reverenced the character of Christ, and, in connection with his insistence on duty, preached a doctrine of renunciation which wears something of a Christian colour.

Carlyle, then, stands as a witness to the reality of the spiritual in an age which, under the pressure of a materialistic mode of thought, was in danger of forgetting it. He stands too as the determined foe of shams and make-believes, of assents to creeds which are merely formal or customary. The fire of sincerity burned in him, and its flames leaped out to destroy all the "wood, hay, stubble" of conventionalism. Perhaps his chief influence upon theology was to make men realise that the symbols and formulas of religion which satisfied one age could not necessarily be expected to satisfy the next. Outward embodiments of religion were required for common worship, and as a bond of union among believers, but they were only clothing, and all clothes wear out in time. "We account him Legislator and wise who can so much as tell when a Symbol has grown old, and gently remove it."[3]

[1] "It is as sure as mathematics such a thing never happened," he told Froude. Quoted from Benn's *History of English Rationalism*, vol. i. p. 418.

[2] *Sartor*, p. 183. But, as we have seen, God viewed as judge and lawgiver is remote.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NEGATIVE MOVEMENT (1840–1855)

In this chapter some attempt is made to estimate the nature of the forces which were opposed to Christianity, or at any rate to orthodox theology, in the ten or fifteen years subsequent to 1840. Much which passed for a hostile attack upon religion was not really so. It was the protest of the more clear-sighted against the identification of essential Christian truth with the presentation of that truth in forms which increasing knowledge showed to be inadequate. In so far as this criticism of traditional Christianity was destructive, it was with a view to future reconstruction. But there was also in these years a movement of doubt and negation sufficiently pronounced to call for special investigation. Some study of it is necessary, if we would understand the reinterpretation of Christian doctrine which gradually came about at a later period.

The discussion which follows falls into three divisions. There is, first, a brief analysis of the causes which led to the rise of the negative movement. Then some account is given of the chief writers of the negative school, and of their books. Lastly, the philosophy of empiricism and utilitarianism is shortly examined.

1. The rise of Biblical criticism probably contributed more than any other cause to create a spirit of unrest. The older theories of verbal or plenary inspiration had clearly broken down; there was need of a new theory. In the writings which we are to examine abundant evidence is found that many drifted into a condition of doubt, because the Bible had for them lost its authority. They were not prepared to accept the authority of the Church, as defined by Newman and the Tractarians, and they could no longer fall back upon the authority of the Scriptures. There was no shelter for them anywhere in "the furnished lodgings of tradition," and they

set out to camp in the wilderness. Without doubt the pressing need was for a saner doctrine of inspiration, as Hare and Sterling and Arnold saw. A Church which, like the Church of England, everywhere made Scripture the source of its dogmatic teaching, could have no peace, until it determined what it meant by the authority of the Bible.

But a distinction must be made between different forms of the attack. There were those who denied altogether the fact of inspiration, who refused to admit that any revelation had been given, or could be given by God to men, and hence regarded the claim of the Bible to contain the record of such a revelation as an absurdity. There were others who, while not denying some measure of inspiration to the Biblical writers, thought that the Bible could not furnish any sure basis for a system of authoritative dogma. The interpretation of the records, they held, was too precarious to admit of any certain conclusions being drawn. Others, again, concentrated their criticism upon the question of miracle; and, denying either the fact or the possibility of the miraculous, sought to reduce Christianity to a scheme of natural religion. Here unquestionably the influence of Strauss was great. W. G. Ward mentions that the *Leben Jesu* was selling more than any other book.[1] Sterling's loss of faith was certainly due in part to Strauss's teaching.[2] Both Charles Hennell and George Eliot, the latter of whom translated the *Life* into English, looked to Strauss as a master. Philosophical and scientific considerations weighed at least as much as arguments derived from criticism with those who denied miracle, but the attack on the miraculous may fairly be regarded as one result of Biblical criticism; for in dealing with ancient documents the critic always kept watch for the presence of the mythological element. The orthodox upholders of Christianity at this time still, for the most part, regarded miracles as one of the bulwarks of the faith, and appealed to them as a primary evidence for the truth of Christianity.

The growth of physical science and of an interest in scientific discovery was the second source of theological doubt. Science had made immense advances earlier in the century,[3] but it was

[1] *Ideal*, p. 266.

[2] Cp. Hare's Memoir at the beginning of vol. i. of *Essays and Tales* by John Sterling, 1848.

[3] Cp. ch. viii. of this volume.

not till after 1830 that much popular interest in the subject was aroused. In that year Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy* was published, and was widely read. In 1831 the British Association was founded. George Eliot tells us of the fascination with which she read Nichol's *Architecture of the Heavens*, published in 1841.[1] Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences* in 1837 helped people to understand the progress of science, and the aim of scientific method as an instrument of research. In all branches of science, but particularly in the more popular sciences of geology and astronomy, interest rapidly grew.[2]

Special mention must be made of one book, the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, by Robert Chambers, published in 1844, which first made the English public acquainted with the idea of evolution as applied to the history of the earth and of its living forms.[3] The nebular hypothesis had been already accepted by astronomers, and the uniformitarian theory in geology, thanks to the influence of Lyell, was displacing the older catastrophic view. Chambers accepted both hypotheses, and went on to attack the doctrine of special creation, and to uphold an evolutionary creed. He used the arguments, now familiar but then generally unknown, from the survival of rudimentary structures; from the development of the embryo which, in rough fashion, recapitulates in its own growth the earlier stages of organic advance; from the facts of the geographical distribution of organisms; from the unity of structural type among species. Life itself he was ready to regard as a development from the inorganic, brought about by natural causes, without any special divine interference. To account for the fact of progress he suggested the hypothesis that, at certain points in the evolutionary process, the embryo of some species would suddenly take a structural leap forward, and so render possible the emergence of a more highly developed organism. This theory orthodox Darwinism rejected; but it is important to note that the occurrence of "mutations" and

[1] *Life of George Eliot*, by J. W. Cross, 3 vols., 1885, vol. i. p. 89.

[2] For a fuller account of the rise of interest in Science, cp. Benn, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. ch. xi.

[3] The secret of the authorship of the book was not publicly known till the publication in 1884 of the twelfth edition, when Alexander Ireland, a friend of Chambers, revealed it.

"discontinuous variations" has to-day been established. The old maxim, *Natura nihil facit per saltum*, does not seem to be invariably true. Science is still no nearer than it was in Chambers's day to an explanation of progress. Why, among the variations which occur in organisms, there should be those which lead to the production of higher forms, is an unsolved mystery. If we do not to-day invoke the aid of the earlier belief in a "tendency to perfection," we have still to own that we have no explanation to offer of the fact that there has been a line of advance from the amœba to man.

The *Vestiges* was violently attacked both by men of science and by theologians.[1] Fixity of species was the orthodox, scientific creed, and was firmly upheld by such authorities as Sedgwick and Agassiz. Theologians objected to the book on two grounds: first, that it contradicted *Genesis*, which was held to teach authoritatively the doctrine of special creation by divine *fiat;* secondly, that evolution meant materialism, the suggestion of an animal ancestry for man being regarded as a degrading belief. Chambers himself was a devout theist, and held that the doctrine of evolution was a support to the argument from design, though not to Paley's presentation of it.

The conflict between science and theology raged round the following points. What was the efficacy of prayer? Was not the reign of law universal; could there be any interference by God, in answer to prayer, with the fixed order of nature? Was miracle possible, in the sense of a contravention of natural law? Was it reasonable to believe in the Christian story of redemption, in face of the revelation made by science as to the vastness of the universe? Could such an insignificant planet as this earth have been the scene of a drama so stupendous?[2] Theologians felt that the general outlook of science was hostile to religion. Science robbed the world of its poetry and spirituality. It interpreted existence in terms of mechanism, bringing even human life under the control of mechanical forces. What room was left for freedom; and, if there was no freedom, what became of the theological doctrine of sin? Materialism might

[1] It was welcomed, however, in the *Westminster Review* and in an article by F. W. Newman in the *Prospective Review*.

[2] Cp. Froude's *Nemesis of Faith*, p. 162.

not, perhaps, be taught so nakedly as it was earlier in the century, when the influence of French atheism was active; but, none the less, the conception of a vast system of physical causation, embracing man and nature in one iron whole, seemed to leave no room for religion. The very sanctities of the human heart were in danger of invasion. Here were men who would "peep and botanise" even on a mother's grave. Wordsworth's plea for a spiritual interpretation of nature, as in the lines on *Tintern Abbey*, came home again with power to many hearts, as a protest against the soulless and godless creed of physical science.

Thirdly, the house of religion was divided against itself. Liberal Churchmen and Evangelicals were in opposition to Tractarianism. In the Tractarian party the Romanising section, headed by Ward, gradually grew stronger, until at last in 1845 the split came, and Newman with many other leaders seceded to Rome. The result was an inevitable weakening of that school of thought, and a reaction, partly in favour of a more Protestant theology, but partly also in a negative direction. Many, whose devotion to the Church was already somewhat languid, cried "a plague o' both your houses," and abandoned altogether their allegiance. The growth of rationalism was greatly helped by the blind folly of Newman in seeking to crush out liberal thought in theology. If the Church had been less narrow and intolerant, many who became her adversaries might have remained her friends. The liberalism which Newman sought to eradicate was all the while steadily gaining ground, and soon found more forcible expression within the Church, but meanwhile present divisions in the ranks of churchmen formed a soil suitable for the growth of doubt and denial.

Lastly, English philosophy, as represented by the prevailing creed of Utilitarianism, was in a state of spiritual bankruptcy. There was need for something deeper. Coleridge had tried to supply it, but the average theologian was not interested in philosophy, and felt no necessity for grounding his beliefs on a philosophical basis. Paley had effected an alliance between theology and utilitarianism, and his views still obtained general currency. But those who thought more deeply had become aware that empiricism was untenable, and that intel-

lectual salvation could be found only in some form of idealism. German thought was slowly filtering through into England, but German speculative theology was not orthodox Christianity, as the Church had always understood it. A situation was thus created which helped to foster doubt. On the one hand, you had a native philosophy whose logical tendency was in the direction of despiritualising human nature; on the other, a foreign philosophical movement, critical of historical Christianity, though prepared to reinterpret it on its own terms; containing, indeed, for those who had eyes to see, the possibility of a fruitful reconciliation between religion and philosophy, but not understood save by the few, and by the many indignantly rejected as a purely destructive force.

2. We turn now to some of the chief writers in this negative movement.

In 1838 Charles C. Hennell published *An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*. He was a Unitarian, a friend of Charles Bray of Coventry who had married his sister Caroline. The Brays and Hennells formed a little group of thinkers whose influence was largely instrumental in causing George Eliot to abandon her earlier Evangelical faith. She appears to have been immensely impressed by the *Inquiry*, which she analysed for Chapman's *Analytical Catalogue* in 1852.[1] The book, however, did not have a very successful sale in England, though it was translated into German, and was warmly commended by Strauss in a preface which he wrote for the German edition. Hennell refused to call his work an attack on Christianity; on the contrary, it was, he maintained, a help toward a truer appreciation of that religion.[2] But the creed of the writer is one of complete humanism and naturalism, and this creed he never relinquished. In a later volume, *Christian Theism*, he admits no revelation beyond that of nature, and no authority above that of human reason. In the *Inquiry* miracle is ruled out as impossible, and an attempt is made to show how the process of idealising arose which surrounded the purely human figure of Jesus with an atmosphere of the supernatural. The influence of Strauss upon

[1] *Life of George Eliot*, vol. i. p. 94.
[2] Preface to 1st ed. of *Inquiry*, p. vii.

Hennell is very marked. Indeed, as we read the book, we feel that, having studied Strauss, and having accepted his conclusions, he came to his task of investigating the Gospel records with his mind already made up. He speaks, however, with reverence of the character of Jesus, though he minimises His originality.

The *Inquiry* had a double object. In the first place, the author wished to show that, apart from any influence of the supernatural or any belief in a special divine control of the nation, there were natural causes at work in Jewish history, sufficient to explain the appearance of a character like that of Christ. Among these he singles out Essenism, which he regards as the root whence Christianity was derived; a hypothesis, which later criticism has proved untenable. Secondly, he sought to prove that a critical analysis of the Gospels shows that in a vast range of particulars the writers cannot be trusted, and that consequently their testimony to the occurrence of miracle is invalid. The book had this value for its age, that it called attention to difficulties and discrepancies in the New Testament narratives. But in no sense can it be reckoned a profound book, and it lacks sufficient appreciation of what we may call the inwardness of Christianity, and of the immense spiritual sovereignty exercised by Christ over the lives of men. Any inquiry into the origin of Christianity must, surely, as Schleiermacher so plainly pointed out, take account of the subsequent vitality of the religion and of the persistence of the Christian consciousness, as facts which imperatively call for explanation.

The Philosophy of Necessity by Charles Bray, a ribbon-maker of Coventry, appeared in 1841.[1] In the preface the author says that he intends to inquire into man's constitution, the boundaries of his mind, his place in creation, and to trace out the working of the universal law of consequences. A hedonist and sensationalist in his philosophy, he seems to have reached his conclusions by a study of James Mill's *Analysis of the Human Mind*, George Combe's *System of Phrenology*, and Bentham's *Deontology*. He denies the existence of human freedom, and preaches a doctrine of universal

[1] The alternative title runs: "The Law of Consequences as applicable to Mental, Moral, and Social Science," 2 vols.

necessity. An unbroken network of causation extends everywhere, and the only meaning which we can attach to cause is antecedence. God he defines as "the all-pervading influence which maintains the connection between all antecedents and all consequents." Such a creed could come to no terms with Christian theology. The book does not treat at any length of religion, but the writer denies that man is morally responsible for his actions, and criticises the doctrine of original sin, which he regards as expressing merely the limitations of the human intellect. He emphasizes the practical bearing of this doctrine of necessity as teaching prudence in regard to consequences. But, if human freedom is non-existent, it is difficult to see what meaning prudence possesses. Man becomes a machine, and his so-called voluntary action is nothing but a necessary result of his inherited disposition and of his circumstances.

Another Unitarian, William Rathbone Greg, published in 1851 *The Creed of Christendom*,[1] which had some circulation and was not altogether without influence. Like Charles Hennell he claims that the volume is not antagonistic to true faith, and it cannot be denied that he exhibits throughout it a religious spirit, and seems really desirous of reaching the truth. He sets out to show that the Gospels cannot be taken as faithful records of the life of Jesus, but ascribe to Him deeds which He never did, and words which He never uttered; and that the Apostles only partially understood, and inaccurately transmitted, the teaching of their master.[2] The rapid spread of Christianity proves, in his opinion, that it was corrupted, and that its success was due as much to its errors as to its truth.[3] But the main contention of the book is that the doctrine of inspiration, as it was then generally understood, was untenable. Further, no theory of inspiration, which a reasonable criticism might accept, could provide a foundation secure enough for the erection upon it of an authoritative, dogmatic system.[4] Greg was certainly right in his demand for a better theory of inspiration. It was the retention by theologians of the old mechanical theory which was the cause

[1] The full title is *The Creed of Christendom; its Foundations and Superstructure.*
[2] Preface, p. ix. [3] Preface, p. xv. [4] Preface, pp. viii. and ix.

of many of the conflicts between theology on the one hand, and science and Biblical criticism on the other. Greg, again, denies the possibility of a special revelation, on the ground that the human mind cannot receive an idea which it does not originate, and has no power to distinguish between an idea revealed by God and one conceived by itself. There is no ground, he maintains, for supposing that Jesus was specially inspired, or was the recipient of any unique revelation. The Church has made the mistake of thinking that Christ should be worshipped instead of imitated. "It has made his life barren, that his essence might be called divine."[1] But he is reverential in his treatment of Jesus, whom he speaks of as the wisest, purest, and noblest of men. With regard to miracle, Greg takes up the position that "a miracle cannot authenticate a doctrine,"[2] and hence that miracles cannot be made the basis of Christianity. Any revelation which makes miracles its credentials can be a revelation only for the age in which it appears, for that age alone can test the truth of the reported occurrences.[3] There are three points, he tells us, where intuition and logic are at variance: the efficacy of prayer, the doctrine of a future life, and human freedom. As to the first, Greg ranges himself on the side of the defenders of law, maintaining that prayer can work no change in the will of God. "Not proven" is his verdict with regard to the second. With regard to the third his general sympathies class him among the determinists.[4]

Rationalistic criticism made miracle the central object of its attack. Why, asks Mackay in *The Progress of the Intellect* (1850), should we suppose that the unknown is governed in a manner different from the known? Why should God be regarded as "a capricious, inexplicable agent exactly at the point where our present information ends?"[5] Miracle is a violation of the order of nature, and of that order the ancients had no conception. The presence of miracle, he urges, is what you would expect to find in primitive religion. Where, as is markedly the case in the Hebrew religion, the feelings are

[1] *The Creed of Christendom*, p. 241.
[2] P. 194.
[3] P. 199.
[4] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xvii.
[5] *The Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews*, 2 vols.: Preface, vol. i. p. ix.

developed at the expense of the understanding, there superstition naturally flourishes.[1] To-day men feel that the regular rather than the irregular best reveals God. Thus for the modern mind the hypothesis of miracle has lost its usefulness.[2] *Intellectual Religion* is the title of the first chapter of the book, and it gives the key to the whole. The writer's object is to trace the gradual emancipation of the human mind in matters of religion from superstition of every kind, and to show that, though faith is the admission of certain inferences beyond knowledge, a sound faith must be strictly governed by knowledge. The volume displays considerable learning, and is an interesting study in comparative religion. It did useful work in calling attention to the presence in the Old Testament of a mythological factor, in pointing out resemblances between the religion of the Hebrews and pagan systems, and in insisting that a study of history showed how creeds and forms of worship inevitably changed their shape with lapse of time and increase of knowledge. George Eliot gave some account of the book in the *Westminster Review*,[3] welcoming and emphasizing its twofold message of the presence of undeviating law in the moral and material worlds, and of the impossibility of limiting revelation to any one race or epoch. But it is clear that by revelation the author means nothing more than man's progressive attempt to discover God. His creed is purely humanistic. All he leaves us is morality, coupled with an idea of God which is merely symbolic. Here, again, as in so much of the work of this period of negation, we feel that the writers have failed to appreciate the uniqueness of Christ, or the true nature and depth of humanity's spiritual need. To the verdict of religious experience they seem to attach little weight. But when that is not disregarded rationalism can never make good its claim.

Another book by Mackay may be briefly noticed, though it was not published till 1863. In *The Tübingen School and its Antecedents* he gives a thoughtful account of the history of Biblical criticism, and of the principles which determined its development. He brings to his investigation the same rationalistic presuppositions which mark his earlier volume. But the book is distinctly able, and must have been of assist-

[1] Pp. 10 and 12. [2] P. 22. [3] January 1851.

ance, at the time when it was published, in helping a perplexed public to understand some at least of the broad lines on which criticism had advanced.

We pass on to consider a group of literary writers whose faith at this time underwent eclipse. Among them may be mentioned Francis Newman, George Eliot, Arthur Hugh Clough, and James Anthony Froude. Of these Froude, if not the ablest, was probably the most distinguished. At one period of his life he was influenced by John Henry Newman, but never to the extent of becoming his disciple. He was always in opposition to the fundamental principles of Tractarianism, and ended by constituting himself the champion of the Reformation which the Tractarians persistently sought to decry. He was ordained, but before long abandoned his orders. Prior to entering the ministry he seems to have studied Strauss, and it is possible that he was already somewhat loosely attached to the creed of which he was to be the official exponent.[1] Two books from his pen concern us here: the first, *Shadows of the Clouds*, published in 1847 under the pseudonym Zeta; the second, *The Nemesis of Faith*, issued two years later in his own name.

Shadows of the Clouds is unquestionably an autobiography. The story of the spiritual progress of the hero of the volume is Froude's own story, at least in general outline. The book describes the drift of a young man, Edward Fowler, from the rigid and narrow orthodoxy in which he had been brought up. It is a protest against a hard and unsympathetic religious education. But Fowler's spiritual wanderings do not end in complete darkness. On the contrary, after spending some years in the wilderness, he sets himself, by the exercise of resolute will and self-reliance, to rebuild his life and character, and reaches finally a clear faith in God and His providence. God and duty are his guiding stars. "The test of orthodoxy is how it affects our conduct." Conduct, says Froude, is not helped by the multiplication of articles of belief. Experience proves that those who hold a complicated creed are no better than those who hold a simple one. The value of a creed increases in proportion to the absence from it of the supernatural element, for "in the region of the supernatural you

[1] Cp. Benn, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 38–9.

were far away from fact, and the religious histories were the symbolic growths of an idea, marking a step in the progress of mankind." [1]

In *The Nemesis of Faith* Froude is more outspoken, and the trouble created by the book led to his resignation of his fellowship at Exeter, a result which he must have foreseen and perhaps courted. The story tells of one Markham Sutherland who is persuaded to swallow his doubts and become ordained. Later, when reported to his bishop for unorthodoxy, he confesses that he cannot accept the doctrine of the Atonement as commonly understood, and indeed finds himself out of sympathy with much which the Church believes. Markham resigns his cure and goes to Italy, where he falls in love with a young married lady whose friendship he has every opportunity of cultivating owing to her husband's constant absence from home. While the two are out one evening in a boat on Lake Como the lady's small daughter gets wet through, the lovers having neglected to look after her. The child dies, and Markham, stung with remorse, goes away. He is on the verge of committing suicide, when a friend of earlier days, a Roman priest, who in the story certainly stands for Newman, happens to pass by and stops him. Under the suasion of this friend, and harried by his own conscience, Markham is admitted into the Roman Church. But the relief thus obtained is only temporary. Authority cannot silence his doubts, which return in intensified form, making his last state worse than his first. The moral of the story is that doubt cannot be suppressed by authority, and that for anyone who is prepared to use his reason freely the position of the orthodox Christian believer is untenable.

The teaching of the volume may be described as a defence of determinism on the one hand, and of the claim of reason against authority on the other. Froude appears to have been led to determinism by the study of Spinoza. Spinoza, he writes, teaches "the impossibility of the existence of a power antagonistic to God; and defining the perfection of man's nature, as the condition under which it has fullest action and freest enjoyment of all its powers, sets this as a moral ideal before us, toward which we shall train our moral efforts,

[1] P. 181.

as the artist trains his artistic efforts towards his ideal."[1] For the determinist sin is a word without meaning. "The spectre which haunted the conscience is gone. Our failures are errors, not crimes—nature's discipline, with which God teaches us; and as little violations of His law or rendering us guilty in His eyes, as the artist's early blunders, or even ultimate and entire failures, are laying store of guilt on him."[2] As to the conflict between authority and reason, Froude opposes Newman on the ground that the latter defies reason. The appeal to the authority of the Church would, he says, be useless, if the Church had lost the affection of her sons. Reason can only be surrendered by an act of reason. Reason is required, if we are to apprehend the infallibility of the Church's judgments. "Why, if reason was a false guide, should we trust one act of it more than another?"[3] In even worse plight is the doctrine of an infallible Bible, for no satisfactory theory of inspiration can be found. With regard to miracles, Froude had already, when writing the life of St. Neots for Newman's series *Lives of the English Saints*, seen the impossibility of accepting most of the recorded ecclesiastical miracles. In *The Nemesis of Faith* he writes that the same reason which rejected the miracles of the saints would soon reject the miracles of the Bible. But Froude remained a theist, holding firmly on to his belief in duty and providence.

Francis Newman, brother of the Cardinal, was the most influential critic of the traditional theology. His *Phases of Faith*[4] (1850) gave summary expression to the doubts and difficulties which had for some years been gathering force in the mind of the thinking public. Charles Hennell, whose mental calibre was far inferior to Newman's, wrote before opinion was ripe for reception of new views in theology. Newman's volume appeared at the opportune moment. In addition, Newman was of an essentially religious nature. Whatever people might feel about his criticism of current beliefs, they could not fail to see that here was a man, sincere in his search for truth, with a keen appreciation of the spiritual side of religion, who with the freest criticism combined personal devoutness.

Two of Newman's writings may be mentioned which

[1] P. 96. [2] P. 96. [3] P. 157.

[4] *Phases of Faith; or Passages from the History of My Creed.*

appeared before 1850. In 1847 he published *A History of the Hebrew Monarchy*, in the preface to which he complains that, if Hebrew history has hitherto remained a sealed book, it is because all clerical and academical teachers have been required to sign the XXXIX Articles, being thus told from their earliest youth what they are to believe, instead of being left free to follow truth wherever it may lead. He confesses in this volume his debt to De Wette, who had been one of the earliest critics to apply to Hebrew history the conception of growth. That conception guides Newman throughout in his treatment. He frankly accepts critical conclusions, calls attention to the moral difficulties of the Old Testament, and insists that the past must be interpreted by the present. God's character remains always the same. Commands attributed to God in primitive times which contradict our moral sense cannot have been given by Him.

In 1849 appeared the most popular of his writings, *The Soul, its Sorrows and its Aspirations*.[1] It contains the same leading thoughts which were more fully developed in *Phases of Faith*. Tennyson's words express the teaching of both volumes—

> "Whose faith has centre everywhere,
> Nor cares to fix itself to form."

Spirit, not form, in religion; the free movement of personal intuition, unfettered by creed or definition—for these he pleads throughout. The soul he describes as "that side of human nature, upon which we are in contact with the Infinite, and with God, the Infinite Personality: in the soul therefore alone is it possible to know God."[2] The soul is to spiritual things what the conscience is to things moral; "each is the seat of feeling, and thereby the organ of specific information to us, respecting its own subject."[3] He writes the book with the object of guiding men to the discovery of spiritual truths which the soul alone can directly discern. He presses the claim of a religion which shall rely less on authority, and shall give more scope for the development of individuality.

[1] Or *An Essay towards the Natural History of the Soul, as the True Basis of Theology.*

[2] Preface to 1st ed. p. v.

[3] P. 8.

"We need more of *Nature* in the soul; that is, a reverting to first principles, a development of primitive instincts, and some increased confidence that there still lives a God to hear and teach us."[1] In chapter vii., "Prospects of Christianity," Newman asks why Christianity has not more power, and answers by saying that it is because we make an unwarrantable demand on men in the matter of evidence. We require of them assent to a mass of intellectual propositions and a body of systematised doctrines, and thus interpose a barrier between the soul and God. We are "trampling down the spirit in an attempt to retain the Form."[2] The result can only be an increase of infidelity. Spiritual doctrine, says Newman, cannot be based either on metaphysics or history. The soul can take no cognisance of the historical element.[3] "Religion can never resume her pristine vigour until she becomes purely spiritual, and, as in apostolic days, appeals only to the Soul."[4]

Some minds are constitutionally impatient of dogma. Newman's was one of them. He was really a mystic in religion. But he lets his feelings get the better of his judgment in his reference to apostolic times. St. Paul's spiritual force owed its intensity largely to the clarity of his doctrinal belief. Newman, however, was right in insisting that the hour had come for a revision of theological doctrine; though his native instinct of individualism prevented him from doing justice to the need for dogma as the bond of a religious society, while the mystical tendency of his mind led him to neglect the historical character of Christianity. Like most of the writers whom we have mentioned, Newman sees that the source of half the current difficulties in belief was a false theory of inspiration. In a section entitled "English Idolatry"[5] he denies the possibility of any authoritative external revelation of moral and spiritual truth, and points out that the ordinary method of procedure with regard to the Bible is to show that there is much in it of which conscience approves, and then to go on and claim infallibility for the whole. People, he says, forget that, if there is anything in it of which conscience disapproves, then, by parity of argument, approval of the whole must be withheld. "Bibliolatry does not consist in reverence to the Bible, however great, as long as Conscience is too dull to rise

[1] *The Soul*, p. 133. [2] P. 154. [3] Pp. 139, 155. [4] P. 158. [5] Ch. ii.

above the Bible; but it consists in *depressing* Conscience to the Biblical standard."[1] For the Bible Newman himself had an intense love and veneration. He found in it evidence of God's sympathy with men, and of the reality of that close communion between the individual soul and God which was the essence of his own creed.[2] But "inspired words were not meant as premises for syllogisms, nor as ready-made weapons against heretics, nor as barriers against free-thought and feeling; but as torches that kindle new souls."[3] Chapter vi. treats of the belief in the future life. Arguments, says Newman, are powerless to prove the existence of such a life; but the soul which is conscious of its union with God will thereby be led to a conviction that death cannot permanently interrupt such a union. He criticises also the doctrine of original sin, arguing that what is popularly spoken of as the total depravity of human nature is really the imperfection which necessarily belongs to every created existence.[4] The current conception of sin needed, he felt, a thorough reinterpretation, and to supply this was one of his chief aims.

Phases of Faith, while taking the same position as *The Soul*, that "to set up any fixed creed as a test of spiritual character is a most unjust, oppressive, and mischievous superstition,"[5] attacks more in detail the specific doctrines of Christianity, the Atonement, the Fall, miracle, the argument from prophecy. The writer traces in the volume his own spiritual history; his gradual abandonment, first of the Calvinism in which he had been brought up, then of the religion of authority, tradition, and the letter; and his discovery that the essence of religion was a sentiment which required no basis of historical fact for its maintenance. The point where his criticism must have most wounded believers was his treatment of Christ. Jesus, he says, appears to have been animated by the one desire to make men believe in Him, without caring on what grounds they so believed, which is tantamount to a charge of self-seeking.[6] He

[1] *The Soul, its Sorrows and its Aspirations*, p. 42, note.

[2] *Phases of Faith*, p. 188.

[3] *The Soul*, p. 162.

[4] P. 55. Cp. *Phases*, p. 95: "I could not find the modern doctrine of the Fall anywhere in the Bible."

[5] Preface, p. iv.

[6] P. 146.

refuses to admit that Jesus was sinless, and argues that we have proof of His imperfection in the fact that, when puzzled with hard questions, He spoke in enigmas, in order to keep up His claim to be a religious guide. He will not allow that Jesus can be regarded as an authoritative teacher, on the ground that God would not give us an oracle "which would paralyse our moral powers, exactly as an infallible Church does, in the very proportion, in which we succeeded in eliciting responses from it."[1] Was there ever a stranger misunderstanding of Christ's appeal or of His method of teaching? Yet Newman, as we have seen, knew what personal religion was. At the centre of all his doubts and negations a flame of living faith burned clear. But the faith was feeling, which could neither accept the existing forms of traditional theology, nor succeed in creating for itself a more adequate intellectual expression.

No one can read the short memoir of Arthur Hugh Clough, prefixed to his collected *Poems and Prose Remains*,[2] without feeling that the paralysis of doubt never arrested the growth of a nobler soul. His scepticism was entirely reverent. He was a patient watcher for a light which never came. Absolute sincerity in belief he demanded both from himself and others. It was this self-imposed demand which made him give up his fellowship at Oriel in 1848. He could trust himself to no other guide than "pure reverence for the inner light of the spirit,"[3] and this left him wandering in a maze of uncertainties. Thus he writes in a short fragment which, apart from his poems, best expresses his religious views:—"Even in like manner my own personal experience is most limited, perhaps even most delusive: what have I seen, what do I know? Nor is my personal judgment a thing which I feel any great satisfaction in trusting. My reasoning powers are weak; my memory doubtful and confused; my conscience, it may be, callous and vitiated."[4] Upon authority he cannot fall back. Rationalism he finds unsatisfying. The historical basis of Christianity is too unstable for secure building. What is left? This: to trust the great religious tradition. And that may be found "every-

[1] *Phases of Faith*, pp. 212, 213.
[2] Two vols., 1869, edited by his wife.
[3] Vol. i. p. 15.
[4] Vol. i., Notes, p. 421.

where; but above all in our own work; in life, in action, in submission, so far as action goes, in service, in experience, in patience, and in confidence."[1] It is to be found too in all the noble thoughts which men have ever expressed. Such wide travel over the seas of human experience will not, however, he feels, alter our judgment that the moral and religious teaching of Christianity is the deepest and most significant of all religious teaching. The spirit of Christianity abides, even though its historical foundation is unsound. What is needed is that we should widen, rather than narrow, our creed. "I feel more inclined to put faith in the currents of the river of things, than because it runs one way to think I must therefore pull hard against it to go the other."[2] The poem *Through a Glass Darkly*, the first five stanzas of which Clough prefixed to the manuscript containing the "Notes on the Religious Tradition," is an excellent illustration of his predominant spiritual mood.

"What we, when face to face we see
The Father of our souls, shall be,
John tells us, doth not yet appear;
Ah! did he tell what we are here!

A mind for thoughts to pass into,
A heart for loves to travel through,
Five senses to detect things near,
Is this the whole that we are here?

. . . . .

Ah yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive;

Must still believe, for still we hope
That in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone.

My child, we still must think, when we
That ampler life together see,
Some true result will yet appear
Of what we are, together, here."

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[1] A. H. Clough, *Poems and Prose Remains*, p. 424. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 426.

Clough is the most typical representative of the prevailing scepticism of his time; its doubts and perplexities are reflected on almost every page of his poetry. What haunted and oppressed him was the sense of the mystery of existence, of the complexity of life, its tangle, and the confused weavings of its threads, which it seemed beyond the power of man to unravel. He longed to find some clue to the problem, but could rest content with no solution which did not bring him into living contact with the very heart of reality. Yet even for him the prospect was not all dark. "Say not the struggle nought availeth." The struggle was moral as well as intellectual, and in some far-off future victory would be his who resolutely followed the path of duty. He passed through life still, in the words of his brother poet, "nursing the unconquerable hope," and though his path was in the twilight, he trod it firmly "by his own heart inspired."

Matthew Arnold's theological writings belong to a later date, but his early poems fall within the period now under review. *Resignation*, which is a true mirror of his mind and character, came out in 1849, and was followed in 1852 by *The Buried Life*, *Self-Dependence*, and *Progress*. He too, like Clough, feels the burden of life's mystery—"I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll"—but his verse breathes a spirit of calm rather than of struggle. He has managed to reach a "sad lucidity of soul"; he has schooled himself "to bear rather than rejoice":

> "But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
> But often in the din of strife,
> There rises an unspeakable desire
> After the knowledge of our buried life;
> A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
> In tracking out our true, original course;
> A longing to inquire
> Into the mystery of this heart which beats
> So wild, so deep in us—to know
> Whence our lives come and where they go.
> And many a man in his own breast then delves,
> But deep enough, alas! none ever mines."[1]

[1] *The Buried Life.*

Even if in some moment of pause in the "hot race" of life the vision of the true meaning of existence dawns upon him, it does not endure; and, while it is present he cannot be sure that he is not being deceived. He only

> "thinks he knows
> The hills where his life rose,
> And the sea where it goes."[1]

For these troubles there is no remedy save the cultivation of an inner serenity. From nature we may learn the lesson "of toil unsevered from tranquillity."[2] Work and duty patiently accomplished will bring some healing to the spirit. Like Mycerinus, we shall take measure of our souls, know their strength, and "by that silent knowledge, day by day," be "calm'd, ennobled, conforted, sustain'd." As for creeds and dogmas, men perhaps cannot do without them; yet for the poet his faith is highest who is content with a purely spiritual religion, and, sitting loose to all intellectual formulas and definitions, and recognising that God

> "Hath look'd on no religion scornfully
> That men did ever find,"

makes it his supreme task to "guard the fire within."[3]

We have already seen how George Eliot was led to abandon her early Evangelicalism by the publication in 1838 of Charles Hennell's *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, but it was not till some years later that her scepticism became pronounced, and that a period of uncertainty was succeeded by a period of active denial. Her growing interest in science, and her association with George Henry Lewes and Herbert Spencer in scientific pursuits, completed the process which the influence of the Hennells and Brays had begun.[4]

[1] *The Buried Life.*

[2] *Quiet Work;* cp. also *Self-Dependence.*

[3] *Progress.*

[4] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 257. I have said nothing in this chapter of Sara Hennell. I tried to read her *Thoughts in Aid of Faith*, which George Eliot described as "quite unparalleled in the largeness and insight with which it estimates Christianity as an organised experience" (*Life of George Eliot*, vol. ii. p. 258); but I confess I was baffled by the author's style, which seemed to me to be chaos let loose. Her scepticism seems to have been less pronounced than that of Charles, and she was certainly a writer of far greater genius and power.

She was instrumental in spreading the spirit of doubt by her translations of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, the latter of which books reduces theology to anthropology, and inculcates a creed of the sheerest naturalism. Of her supremacy as a literary artist this is no place to speak, but her novels and poems, taken in connection with her personal history, suggest the problem of the extent to which they can be called a self-revelation.[1] They reflect the sadness and moral struggles of her life, but there is a note of self-satisfaction in them which seems to indicate that she had never plumbed the depths of spiritual experience or penetrated to the heart of Christianity. I cannot do better than quote here Tulloch's striking words: "There is nothing indeed in autobiography more wonderful than the facility with which this remarkable woman parted first with her faith and then with the moral sanctions which do so much to consecrate life, while yet constantly idealising life in her letters, and taking such a large grasp of many of its moral realities. Her scepticism and then her eclectic Humanitarianism have a certain benignancy and elevation unlike vulgar infidelity of any kind. There are gleams of a higher life everywhere in her thought. There is much self-distrust, but no self-abasement. There is a strange externality,—as if the Divine had never come near to her save by outward form or picture,—never pierced to any dividing asunder of soul and spirit."[2] Did she part from her earlier faith without any real regret? Or had the truth of Christianity never come home to her as a living, personal possession? These inner secrets of the soul we cannot read. She has left, at any rate, no record of having passed through any intense, spiritual crisis, and she ended by accepting the teaching of naturalism. "The idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human."[3]

The name of George Henry Lewes deserves mention in connection with the negative movement. He exercised considerable influence between 1840 and 1860 in the promotion of scientific modes of thought. A keen searcher for truth, and an acute and versatile critic, he did much to make men realise the

[1] Cp. *George Eliot* in Dowden's *Studies in Literature*, 1789–1877.
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 259.
[3] *Life*, vol. iii. p. 245.

importance of adopting sound methods of inquiry, particularly in psychology. His most original contribution was probably his insistence that mental phenomena should be studied in relation to their social and historical conditions.[1] What concerns us here, however, is his attitude to religion. That was frankly negative. His mental development was governed by Mill's *Logic* and Comte's *Positive Philosophy*. Of the latter he wrote a popular exposition which helped to introduce Comtism to English readers. Like Comte he wished to banish metaphysics and theology entirely. In the *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845–6), he seeks to show that all philosophy is a ploughing of the sands. "Metempirical" knowledge he regards as being beyond the reach of the human mind. Philosophy, he thinks, would do better to adopt scientific methods; indeed, he claims that by the use of such methods the final problems of philosophy can be solved. In his later work, *Problems of Life and Mind* (1874), he attempts to prove his contention, but he fails to distinguish carefully between the scientific and the philosophical problem. Science can never take the place of metaphysics. The one is an inquiry into the structure of the part, the other an inquiry into the meaning of the whole, including that of the mind which sets out to know the whole. To discuss his failure here would, however, take us outside the limits of our present purpose. It is enough to note that Lewes in these twenty years after 1840 was a keen, enthusiastic teacher who would banish religion, and substitute for it an education in the principles of science.

3. Several causes may be adduced to explain the anti-religious character of Utilitarianism. In the first place, the personal factor counts for much. Bentham's hostility to Christianity grew steadily from the day when, as a boy at Oxford, he did violence to his conscience by signing the XXXIX Articles; it culminated in a series of open attacks upon religion. His *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Explained*, his *Not Paul but Jesus*, and finally *The Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind* (1822), which was a joint work by himself and George Grote, published under the pseudonym Philip Beauchamp,

[1] Cp. article in *Encycl. Brit.*, 9th ed.

show the deep-rooted hatred, not only of revealed, but also of natural religion. This last volume is concerned, less with demonstrating the untruth of religion, than with emphasizing its harmful effects upon the social welfare of the community. Though some of its criticisms are sound as against the popular, anthropomorphic conception of God, the book as a whole (and the same may be said of the *Catechism Examined*) fails to do justice to the good effects which have flowed from religion. If religion is so pernicious in its results as Bentham maintains, how is it that its alliance with morality has been so long maintained?[1] The truth is that Bentham, where religion was concerned, was incapable of being fair. He seems to have been almost totally devoid of the religious sense. His notion of God was that of a gigantic policeman or arbitrary tyrant. His presentation of Christianity can only be called a grotesque travesty.

George Grote, though not so openly violent in his antagonism, was an unflinching opponent of religion and the Church. He never seems to have taken the trouble to examine carefully the evidences for the Christianity which he rejected, but was content to follow his teacher, James Mill, in his opposition to the established creed.[2] The latter had himself been for a few years in early life a minister of religion, and his subsequent hatred of Christianity was doubtless intensified by the fact that he had once blessed what he now cursed. But he too, like Bentham, misunderstood Christianity. He never rose above the crudest deistic conception of God, as a being externally related to the universe, and responsible, as its creator, for the good and evil in it. Finding that belief untenable, he accepted Manicheism as his creed, and finally put the consideration of religion altogether out of his mind. As far as his verdicts on religion are concerned, he can hardly be taken seriously. His anti-Christian influence on his pupils was, however, marked. Of these his son, John Stuart Mill, is the most famous. The story of the boy's education by his father is well known. He has told us in his *Autobiography* how he was brought up without any religious teaching, and how he was one of the few examples in England of a man who did not reach scepticism by an

[1] Cp. Benn, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 301.
[2] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

abandonment of earlier beliefs, because he had no earlier beliefs to abandon. Later in life he turned to a study of religion, and the more friendly views about it which he then expressed caused the older utilitarians to regard him with some suspicion as a deserter from the ranks. But his upbringing as a boy inevitably affected his whole mental attitude to the subject. We cannot but feel that, had religion been sympathetically presented to him at the first, he would in the end have reached a theism less meagre, and more definitely Christian.

The utilitarians again, because of the very object which they had in view, were naturally inclined to regard religion with hostility. Their main interest was in social reform and in the promotion of the general happiness of the community. To effect their end they set themselves to study man in his social relations. The growth of the physical sciences, and the success which had attended the application of exacter methods of research to the world of nature, led to the rapid development of the historical sciences.[1] Exacter methods were adopted in these also. The collection and study of facts, the analysis of concrete historical conditions, began to occupy attention. It was easy to argue that religion was not amenable to scientific treatment. It dealt with the transcendent and unprovable; it was the region where vague fancy and imagination flourished. It had, therefore, better be left out of account. There was more profit to be gained by turning to the amelioration through legislation and education of the plain ills of the body politic. So glaring were these, that it would need the whole energy of the reformer to deal with them. In addition, the Church, which was the official exponent of religion, was the home and bulwark of privilege; and to attack monopoly and privilege was the utilitarian aim. Once more the keen ethical sense which distinguished many members of this school, and notably John Mill, was offended by some of the doctrines of the popular theology, such as substitutionary atonement or eternal punishment. In their protest against what they considered to be immoral teaching, they were apt to overlook what was true in Christianity, and so were in danger of condemning the whole system, root and branch.

[1] In the intellectual revival of the eighteenth century on the Continent, the growth of the historical sciences preceded that of the physical.

But the deepest reason for the anti-religious character of utilitarianism is to be found in the philosophical basis of the movement. A philosophy of experience, such as that of these writers, has no room for metaphysics; and theology implies metaphysics, and rests upon it. John Mill's *Essays on Religion* afford, as we shall see, ample proof of the artificial character of the alliance effected by him between his theism and his empiricism. Religion must always remain something of an exotic for one who adopts Mill's philosophical standpoint; it cannot spring naturally from the soil. A reasonable theology, or a philosophy of religion which can justify itself to the mind, demands a conception of human nature and of the processes of knowing and volition radically different from that of empiricism.

Detailed criticism of utilitarianism is unnecessary here; we need deal only with a few central points. We may begin with the determinism of the school and its fundamental maxim that "circumstances make the man." John Mill (we confine ourselves to him as the most distinguished representative of the movement) had inherited from his father a deterministic creed, and from it he never broke away. His main interest was, not in metaphysics, nor directly in physical science, but in the social sciences. Man in his natural and social surroundings was the object of his study. But man's life was rooted in the larger life of nature, and nature was the scene of invariable law. The whole universe formed one system of rigidly ordered sequences, and in this nexus human action was included. The object of science was to discover the particular connections, the uniformities of succession or coexistence, which made up the whole. But what of the human will? Can human volition be brought under the law of universal causation as Mill defines it? This is the point where we reach one of the cardinal defects of the empirical school. Mill discusses the question in his *Logic*, which was published in 1843.[1] He asserts the reality of human choice. Man, he says, "has, to a certain extent, a power to alter his character. Its being, in the ultimate resort, formed for him, is not inconsistent with its being, in part, formed *by* him as one of the intermediate agents."[2] He goes on to say that the doctrine of free-will, by insisting on a truth which the

[1] People's edition, 1886, Bk. III. section 5; and Bk. VI. section 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 550.

necessitarian neglects, "the power of the mind to co-operate in the formation of its own character, has given to its adherents a practical feeling much nearer to the truth than has generally (I believe) existed in the minds of Necessitarians." [1]

Mill here, as in his treatment of the Benthamite doctrine of pleasure and in his qualified acceptance of theism, is struggling to get free from the meshes of his inherited creed. But if we question him, we find that his assertion of the reality of choice is not made in terms which set man above nature and her working. Man helps to make his own character, we are told, but his "character is formed by his circumstances." [2] One of these circumstances is "his own desire to mould it in a particular way." [3] But whence comes that desire? Mill's only answer is—from circumstances, from his inherited disposition and his training. If he had written "his own *determination* to mould it," he might have saved human freedom, but it would have been at the expense of his logic. As it is, though he strives to do so, he never succeeds in so interpreting human action as to make it impossible to regard it as the effect of impersonal forces.[4]

But we must go further and ask what Mill meant by a cause. In their account of causation the utilitarians were following Hume. Hume had explained cause as meaning antecedence. A was followed by B, B by C. We observed these successions in nature. If they were constantly repeated, we grew to expect them, and in proportion to the frequency of the repetition was our assurance that the same sequence would recur; until at last, though with no logical but only a psychological justification, we spoke of necessary connections in nature. In like manner Mill sees in sequence the essence of the causal bond. The cause of a phenomenon he defines as "the antecedent, or the concurrence of antecedents, on which it is invariably and unconditionally consequent." [5] He has, of course, no title to the use of the word "invariable." For him all knowledge was built up by the repetition of sense impressions. But no amount of repetition of an event can do more than create an expectation that it will occur again. It cannot produce

[1] Mill's *Logic*, p. 551. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 550. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 550.

[4] Cp. *John Stuart Mill*, by Charles Douglas, p. 171. This is one of the best studies of Mill's philosophy with which I am familiar.

[5] *Logic*, p. 223.

certainty, the certainty, for example, of the chemist who can say unhesitatingly that ten thousand years hence oxygen and hydrogen, if he combines them in his laboratory, will produce water. For the moment, however, we may pass by this illegitimate assumption. But is orderly sequence what we primarily mean by cause? Surely the essence of cause is power to produce change. A cause produces, not merely precedes, the effect. What is the source of this notion of power? We derive it from our own wills. We are aware of our volitional power, and know that we can, by an exercise of that power, bring about changes in the world of phenomena; we can, for example, move our limbs. On observing like changes in nature, we infer that they proceed from a cause which has power to produce them. We transfer to the world around us the thought of the efficiency which we know that we ourselves possess.

Upon the decision of this issue between the determinist and the libertarian everything turns. Deny real freedom to man, deny him the power of originating change, make him merely a channel through which flow the forces of the external world, and you have made morality and religion meaningless. I ought, I can, I will—so runs the record of moral experience. Religious experience, again, speaks of sin, and regards sin as a voluntary offence against God. But sin for the determinist can only mean imperfection for which the agent is not responsible. Further, if there is no freedom in man, by what right can we speak of a will behind phenomena? Our ground for regarding God as a personal will is that we ourselves are persons, and know the meaning of freedom. Freedom, whatever difficulties may surround the attempt to give a theory of it, is an ultimate fact behind which we cannot go. Its reality is affirmed both by moral and religious experience, and any account of personality which denies it voids personality of its meaning.

This despiritualising of human nature, which is characteristic of empiricism, is seen again in its treatment of mind and of the process of knowing. It received its completest expression in the writings of Hume and James Mill. John Mill constantly shows his sympathy with a truer creed, toward which he painfully feels his way, but he too must be classed as at heart a sensationalist. To the earlier empirical tradition

"His faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

All knowledge comes from sensation. That is the starting-point of the empiricist. Knowledge and experience are built up out of the units of sense-impression. A psychological analysis of the mental processes shows how the work of construction is carried out, and reveals the associative tendencies which operate to produce the world of knowledge. But a difficulty at once occurs. Who binds the units of sensation together? A sensation is a fleeting thing. It is registered in consciousness; then it vanishes, and another succeeds it. There must be some self, some unity of personality, to form a centre round which the transitory sensations can be grouped, and this self must be active. Sensations cannot group themselves. If we had only the stream of sensation, we should have neither experience nor knowledge, both of which imply unity and orderly arrangement. There would be no "we" to be the subjects of experience. To say that association unifies sense-impressions is to personify an abstraction. But empiricism, strictly taken, has no place for the self or for mental activity. Every empiricist, indeed, has illegitimately to assume the existence of some active mental power, or he could never move an inch along the road of explaining the growth of knowledge. But the assumption contradicts his professed psychological starting-point. And there is a further difficulty which troubled John Mill not a little. If sensation is all that is given us, then we can never know anything but our own ideas. Knowledge must be limited to subjective mental states, to sensations and the mental complexes which we form out of them. As Mill says, "of the outward world we know and can know absolutely nothing, except the sensations which we experience from it."[1] The outward world is merely the unknown and unknowable cause of our sensations. We infer that something external is there because of the sensations which we have. But this is not what we mean by knowledge; and Mill himself, when he is treating of causation, is thinking of the sequences and coexistences which science discovers among phenomena as being real relations in a real, objective world. No theory of knowledge is possible, if you start with bare sensations, unreferred to outward reality; and to reduce outward reality to ideas is to cease to make it real. We must, indeed, work from within outwards.

[1] *Logic*, p. 39.

We must use mind, as we know it in ourselves, as the key with which we are to unlock the door of reality, but the mind which we know is not the empty abstraction of the empiricist. It is the mind of a self, creative, unifying, developing by its own laws, a mind in living contact with a real world at every stage of its growth. Knowledge is not of ideas, but of reality as known and interpreted by a self. And the fact that we do progressively grow to understand reality, and find ourselves at home in the world around us, is proof that that world is constructed on rational principles. The mind within us recognises the marks of the mind without us. Man rises to a knowledge of God through reflection upon his own being and the world of nature. As we study Mill's philosophy, we see how he was constantly contradicting his empirical presuppositions, and how his interest in the social study of man forced him to break away from the individualism and subjectivism of the earlier empiricists.[1] But it is as an empiricist he must be judged. It was along this line that his influence extended, and it is his empiricism which explains his attitude to religion. To his religious views we now turn.

Of his three *Essays on Religion*, that on *Nature* and that on the *Utility of Religion* were written between 1850 and 1858. The third essay on *Theism* was composed in the period 1868–1870, and so falls outside the strict chronological limits of this chapter. But we may well consider all three, because they are essential to an understanding of Mill's theological beliefs, and because they afford such striking proof of the difficulties which inevitably beset the path of anyone who tries to combine theism with a sensationalist philosophy.

Readers of Mill's *Autobiography* will remember the mental crisis which overtook him when a young man, his dissatisfaction with life and with his own intellectual position, and the healing which he found, when he turned to a study of poetry, and began to realise the need of cultivating the emotions. These essays bear witness to the permanence of the change then wrought in him; they show the value which he attached to the religious sentiments. "The essence of religion," he writes, "is the strong

[1] Cp. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 95. One of the chief merits of this study lies in the author's carefulness to do full justice to those elements in Mill's thought which contain the promise of a richer and more satisfying philosophy.

and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognised as of the highest excellence, and as rightly paramount over all selfish objects of desire."[1] The reference here, it is true, is not to theism, but to the Comtist religion of humanity which Mill considered superior as a creed to any form of supernaturalism. But the passage is proof that he fully appreciated the value and need of some kind of religion.

What, now, had Mill to say about theism? In the essay on *Nature* he brings a tremendous indictment against the recklessness and cruelty which reign in the natural world, and insists that nature is no model for man to follow. "Next to the greatness of these cosmic forces, the quality which most forcibly strikes every one who does not avert his eyes from it, is their perfect and absolute recklessness. They go straight to their end, without regarding what or whom they crush on their road. . . . In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's every day performances."[2] Nature cannot be praised even for her order. "All which people are accustomed to deprecate as 'disorder' and its consequences, is precisely a counterpart of Nature's ways. Anarchy and the Reign of Terror are overmatched in injustice, ruin, and death, by a hurricane and a pestilence."[3] Man's duty is clear. He cannot imitate nature. He cannot take even his own natural instincts as a guide. All his virtues and excellences are artificial, the result of refusal to follow nature. "There is hardly a single point of excellence belonging to human character, which is not decidedly repugnant to the untutored feelings of human nature."[4] The conclusion which Mill reaches is that God, the author of nature, cannot be both omnipotent and benevolent. "If the maker of the world *can* all that he will, he wills misery, and there is no escape from the conclusion."[5] Those, he says, who have won strength from the belief in the sympathy and support of a powerful and good governor of the world have never really believed in his omnipotence. "They have always saved his goodness at the expense of his power."[6]

[1] *Utility of Religion*, p. 109 of 2nd ed. of Essays, 1874.
[2] P. 28. [3] P. 31. [4] P. 46. [5] P. 37.
[6] P. 10. Cp. also *Theism*, pp. 176–80.

In the essay on *Theism* Mill discusses the argument from design which he considers to be "of a really scientific character," grounded on experience, and sound at the core. "I think it must be allowed that, in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence."[1] The particular instance which he selects is the eye. Sight is subsequent to the formation of the organ. The eye is formed in the darkness of the womb for an environment in which it will at a later date find itself. Chance, he says, cannot account for that adaptation; we must conclude, therefore, that the cause of it was "an antecedent Idea" of sight. "But this at once marks the origin as proceeding from an intelligent will."[2]

Mill, then, admits the existence of God as creator and designer, but refuses to regard Him as omnipotent and completely benevolent. But we have to ask whether he is entitled to this impaired theistic faith, and the answer must be that he is not. In the first place, he refuses to admit that the presence of an idea, or need, or wish in the mind of man proves the reality of a corresponding object. "The mode of reasoning which I call unscientific . . . is that which infers external objective facts from ideas or convictions of our minds."[3] And we have seen how his theory of knowledge, if it is taken strictly, shuts us up to a knowledge of states of consciousness only. To pass beyond them, as in the case of the teleological argument, is, on Mill's premises, an illogical procedure. Nor is Mill, perhaps, unaware of this; for we find him propounding two opposed theories of religion, one which makes religion have to do only with our human ideals of excellence, the other involving an objective reference to God as a Being apart from the universe.[4] In the second place, in the essay on *Theism* he speaks of the structure of the eye as affording proof that it came from "intelligent will." But by what right does he refer to will as the creative agent? In the empirical philosophy will as an originative power has no place. If man does not know what origination is in himself he cannot predicate it of God. Even if we allow

[1] P. 175. He discusses the evolutionary hypothesis of survival of the fittest, but thinks that it will not meet the case of the eye.

[2] Pp. 171–2. [3] P. 139.

[4] This is well brought out by Douglas, *op. cit.*, ch. xi.

that Mill, from observation of natural adaptations, could rightly speak of a supreme mind, he cannot be allowed logically to speak of a supreme will. Nor can the right to speak of a supreme mind be conceded to him, for this implies that mind is more than a function of matter. If it is only a function of matter, as strict empiricism holds, why should we predicate it, rather than matter, of the ultimate cause of the universe? Mill, it is true, was not a materialist, in the ordinary meaning of the word, but this fact does not affect our criticism. The point is, that Mill everywhere treats inner mental processes, equally with outer material processes, as the product of circumstances.

Similar objection may be taken to the distinction drawn in the first essay between man's artificial morality and his untutored instincts. How can man legitimately bring an indictment against nature, if he is himself merely a part of nature? For a rigid determinist the distinction between natural and artificial law can have no meaning. If from the superior vantage ground of morality man feels compelled to pass a censure upon the cosmic forces, it can only be because he refuses to regard himself as nothing else but a wheel in the machine of the universe. Mill never adequately realised (and this is the root of all his troubles) that the presence of man in nature, man with his morality and his ideals, gives a new and richer significance to nature. Sprung, in one sense, from nature, man transcends her in another; and it is this spiritual transcendence of man of which we must take account in framing our final philosophy.

The theism, then, which Mill reaches, and reaches only at the expense of his consistency, is really a barren deism. A God externally related to man and the universe is his only conception of God, and that can never satisfy the philosopher who is searching for a final unity. Indeed, it does not leave us with a unity at all; but it gives us a series of antecedents, and outside the series another antecedent, God, upon whom the whole series depends. No philosophy of religion can be satisfactory which reaches God only as the last term in a string of arguments. If God is the final goal of our thinking, His existence must also, in some sense, be the presupposition of it, and our reasoning about Him must be the explication of what is involved in this initial presupposition. The true root of religion lies in the fact that man

is a self-conscious, reflective being, possessed of moral ideals and the power of originating action. Despiritualise man with the empiricist, and you at the same time despiritualise the universe. Admit man's inherent spirituality, and you can then use his nature as a key for interpreting existence. Mill never does justice to the contents and implications of the religious consciousness, and by the terms of his philosophy is precluded from relating human ideals to God, as their source and completion.

We may add that Mill refuses to admit the possibility of miracle. "The conclusion I draw is that miracles have no claim whatever to the character of historical facts, and are wholly invalid as evidences of any revelation."[1] With regard to Christianity, he held that Christ made no pretensions to be God, and would have considered any such claim as blasphemous. It remains, however, a possibility that he was "a man charged with a special, express and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue."[2]

In conclusion, brief mention may be made of one other writer, Auguste Comte (1798–1857), because of the influence which he exercised on Mill and on some of Mill's contemporaries, such as G. H. Lewes and Alexander Bain, and because of the general affinity between much of his thought and that of the empiricists. Comte belongs to the circle of writers in France who were stirred to intellectual activity by the break-up of social institutions consequent on the Revolution. His object was to help in the reconstruction of social order by a critical investigation of the conceptions upon which society had hitherto been based; and, further, to relate the true principles of social order which he hoped to discover to other branches of knowledge, so as to form a systematic whole of thought. In early life he came under the influence of S. Simon, and though he cannot be called his disciple, there can be no question that he was much stimulated by him in his determination to reduce social and political phenomena to law. Comte's title to fame rests chiefly upon his conception of the new science of society, and the originality with which he defined its scope and method; but in the mind of the general public his name will be remembered for his enunciation of the Law of the Three States. The human intellect, he taught, passes in its advance to clearer

[1] *Theism*, p. 239. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

knowledge through three stages, theological, metaphysical, and positive. In the theological stage, changes in the phenomenal world are explained by reference to volition, either the volition of some supernatural being, or a volition mysteriously supposed to reside in the object. To this stage belong the animistic beliefs of primitive religion. In the metaphysical stage thought grows more abstract, and attributes to force what it had previously attributed to volition, but the force is somehow conceived as an entity apart from the object. In the last, or positive stage, the stage of truly scientific inquiry, conceptions of essence or independent cause are abandoned, and the idea of law takes their place. Every event is now related to other events. The happenings of the universe are grouped in a systematic whole, and each change is referred to other changes as its ground.

Comte wished to abolish both theology and metaphysics, and to show that the life of man in society was amenable to a strictly scientific treatment; and, further, to emphasize the intimate connection between a sound theory of social order and practical reforms. Positivism carries with it this double reference to theory and to practice.[1] But though he was violently hostile to theology in general, and to Christianity in particular, Comte felt that religion was a necessity in the life of man. Submission to some power beyond men was a condition of the fullest human development, and of the growth of healthy emotion. He sought, therefore, to enlist the religious sympathies of men, by setting up collective humanity as the supreme object of devotion and worship. Mankind was to adore its own idealised image, by the help of a highly elaborate ritual which Comte borrowed from Roman Catholicism. His creed has been described as "Catholicism *minus* Christianity." In one of his early publications[2] he had defended

[1] The first volume of the *Course of Positive Philosophy* was published in 1830, the sixth and last in 1842. This work was intended by the author to be the introduction to, and foundation of, the *System of Positive Polity* (1851–4). In a general survey of Comte's thought, the latter work may fairly be regarded as a fuller sequel of the former, though some critics, Mill among them, have argued that there are important differences between the two. The scope and method of the new social science are discussed in the last three volumes of the *Positive Philosophy*, and in the second and third volumes of the *Positive Polity*.

[2] *Considerations on the Spiritual Power*, 1826.

the need for a spiritual power in the state which should be independent of the temporal power, and he hoped to find what he looked for in a purified and reorganised Romanism. The process of purgation must necessarily have been drastic, but at any rate some of the ritual might remain, with a priesthood devoted to the service of collective humanity. It is unnecessary here to criticise the religion of humanity. The measure of success which has attended Comte's efforts to create a new religion may be judged by the fewness of the members of the Positivist Church.

Mill, as we have already mentioned, was influenced by Comte. He corresponded with him before 1842, and admits that Comte had helped him to discard Benthamism, and that he owed to him several valuable suggestions embodied in the *Logic*.[1] He accepted as true Comte's generalisation as to the Law of the Three States.[2] Though he was not a Positivist in the stricter meaning of that term, the note of Positivism sounds through his writings. Both he and Comte found their main interest in the study of social science, which they prosecuted systematically, and with a utilitarian object. Both professed to confine their study to phenomena, though neither of them entirely discarded metaphysics. Both were determinists; Comte, however, was an outspoken materialist. The dependence of mind on brain was one of his cardinal doctrines. He was no believer in immortality, and would admit none of Mill's theological reserves. Mill was a Protestant, and had inherited an individualism which was the source of many of his difficulties. Comte was brought up as a Roman Catholic, and everywhere tended to subordinate the individual to the system of the whole.[3]

A broad survey of this negative movement reveals clearly its weaknesses. Its philosophy of human nature was too meagre; it failed to appreciate the spiritual greatness of man. It failed, too, to do justice to Christianity, and in particular to the uniqueness of Christ. It tended to view Christianity from without, rather than from within. But, despite these defects, it was unquestionably of service to theology, because it led theologians to think more deeply, and prepared them to dis-

[1] There are many references to Comte in Book VI.

[2] *Logic*, p. 606.

[3] Cp. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

card beliefs which the advance of knowledge was rendering untenable. English theology at this time was infected with a spirit of blind traditionalism. It was good for it, under the presence of a hostile attack, to be driven to become reflective. Such reflection could only make it stronger, while it would bring into clearer light the fundamental antagonism between its own presuppositions and those of negativism. This earlier stage of negativism was helping to prepare theologians for the more sustained attack which was to come from the side of science after, let us say, 1855.

CHAPTER XX

BROADENING INFLUENCES (1845–1860)

1. Among the forces which in the period 1845–1860 were making for greater breadth and freedom of thought, the first place must be given to the steady growth of Biblical criticism. In the story of that growth the year 1855 marks a turning-point in England. It was then that, at the suggestion, or at least under the influence, of Arnold, Stanley's Commentary on The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians, and Jowett's on The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans, were simultaneously published. These volumes marked the definite establishment in England of that school of historical criticism which has flourished ever since, and has produced such leaders as Hort, Lightfoot, and Westcott.[1] Earlier in the century, as we have seen, Whately and the Noetics had boldly applied critical methods to the Bible, and the newer school now arising was the lineal descendant of these pioneers. But criticism for the critics of the middle of the century meant something far richer than it had meant for the older scholars. It was instinct with a new spirit of life and historic movement. It may, perhaps, best be described by saying that it had a feeling for the Bible as literature, a desire to understand it in its historical growth, and a determination to study each Biblical writer in the circumstances under which he lived and wrote. It was critical of traditional interpretations, because it realised that too frequently they stood in no living relation to the original meaning of the passage interpreted. The custom still obtained of defending doctrine by the exhibition of a series of proof-texts which were often violently torn from their context and arbitrarily explained, a process which the division of the narrative into numbered texts facilitated. Doctrine so defended was in danger of becoming dead dogma. These newer

[1] Cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

critics wished to present the teaching of the various parts of the Bible in its original meaning, and so to make possible a true historical study of doctrinal development. In this aim they were helped by the growth of critical methods in the investigation of ancient history. Grote's studies in early Greek history, and George Cornewall Lewis's volume, the *Credibility of Early Roman History*, had proved the need for criticism of traditional views. The fuller development of this historical criticism came later, after the crisis caused by the publication of *Essays and Reviews*. The method grew by use and self-criticism. No definite beginning can, perhaps, be assigned to it, for it was a feeling for history which inspired the whole movement of Biblical study throughout the century; but we are not wrong in regarding Stanley and Jowett as two of its earliest English promoters. Stanley's power of historical sympathy and his pictorial imagination were of immense value in making the Bible live for the men of his generation. Already, eight years earlier, in *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, he had shown a feeling for local colour, and a remarkable insight into the life and circumstances of the primitive Church, which struck a new note in Biblical interpretation.

In the *Essays and Dissertations* which form the second volume of the Commentary we have a clear exposition of Jowett's general thought and attitude. They have in no way lost their freshness to-day. They are full of suggestive ideas, and possess a great charm of style. Breaking ground which was new at the time, they brought a free, critical judgment to bear upon some of the central doctrines of traditional theology. The Commentary remains a valuable example of sympathetic and discriminating interpretation. Some account of three of these dissertations may help us to appreciate the writer's method and point of view.

That on "Natural Religion" raises the problem of the meaning of revelation. Who can say, asks Jowett, where natural religion ends and revealed religion begins? Revealed religion presupposes natural. The opposition between the two is an opposition of abstractions to which no facts really correspond. Hence it may be well at times "to lay aside the two modes of expression, and think only of that 'increasing pur-

pose which through the ages ran.'" [1] God has never left Himself anywhere without witness; revelation is world-wide and continuous. Jowett is arguing against the prevailing view of revelation which limited it to certain periods and a certain nation, with the result that Hebrew and Christian thought were treated in a false isolation. One of the objects of the essay was to show that both Judaism and Christianity incorporated elements from other religions, and were not excluded from the operation of the ordinary forces of history. Criticism, he implies, helps to remove the strangeness of the past by bringing it into harmony with the present, and by showing that causes which are at work now were at work then. Has Christianity suffered, Jowett asks, by the admission of this wider outlook? Is its splendour less? On the contrary, now for the first time appears its true glory, the glory of comprehensiveness. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Problems such as these were being forced upon men's attention by the growth of the study of comparative religion and of the historical method, and Jowett shows throughout the essay that he fully appreciated the change of outlook which the new inquiries were causing. Two time-honoured beliefs had already been swept away, the belief that the heathen religions were relics of a primæval revelation, and the belief that they were impostures fabricated in the interests of a power-loving priesthood. The lesson taught by Lessing and Herder was beginning to win acceptance, that a nation's religion is the natural expression of, and corresponds to, the structure of its mind and character.[2] Comparative study, again, says Jowett, teaches us to separate the accidents from the essence of Christianity, its local type from its abiding spirit. It will help us to acquire a largeness of vision which may prevent us from becoming the passive victims of party-spirit. Nor, as we seek to naturalise the early forms of religion, and trace their origin

[1] Vol. ii. p. 207, edit. 1894, edited by Lewis Campbell.

[2] This is precisely the point where orthodox theologians found fault with Jowett. They charged him with denying any special inspiration to the writers of the Old Testament. We have to settle what we mean by special inspiration, and whether our theory of inspiration loses in value, if for a special communication from God to certain individuals we substitute a God-given religious endowment of the Hebrew nation. Cp. Sanday's Bampton Lectures, *Inspiration*, lecture iii., for a discussion of the meaning of the inspiration of the prophets.

to the mixed influences of race, climate, mental structure, social custom, do we lose the sense of the divine activity. Rather, the forces of nature and history are seen to be just the energy of God at work. If all is natural, all is at the same time supernatural. Ideas such as these represent the teaching of the essay, whose occasion was the problem raised by St. Paul's condemnation of the heathen. We are driven to ask what they could have known of God. Scripture, Jowett tells us, admits only the clear-cut moral distinctions of good and bad. Its view, therefore, is incomplete ; it neglects all those qualifying conditions which are forced upon us to-day by our increased historical knowledge.

The essay on "The Atonement" illustrates the principle which Jowett put in the forefront of his exegesis, that Scripture is its own best interpreter. Everywhere the writer's original meaning must be discovered, and must determine our explanation of a passage. We have, says Jowett, in the course of our theological development overlaid the primitive meaning of many parts of the Bible with a mass of technical language which we must set aside, if we are to reach the mind of the writer. Martineau, in reviewing the work, fixed upon this point: "At length we have reached the crisis of promise, and critics are found who, instead of interrogating St. Paul on all sorts of modern questions, listen to him on his own, and draw from him, not a fancied verdict on the sixteenth century, but a faithful picture of the first." No doctrine, says Jowett, has suffered more than the doctrine of the Atonement from this mistake of elaboration and over-definition. We must, in our presentation of it, revert to the simplicity of the Scriptures, which are clear about the great truths of morality and religion, but say nothing about "the distinctions and developments of theological systems." What is needed is a very simple statement of Christ's work in which His death is not isolated from His life, but the two are viewed together as a whole. "In theology the less we define the better." Most of our difficulties come from trying to define what must remain uncertain. The faith of Christ, he urges, must not be entangled with passing systems of philosophy. The fact of the Atonement is greater than any theory about it. Jowett's maxim, then, is—keep close to Scripture, and in your interpretation of it see that you give the greatest prominence

to the moral and spiritual meaning of the language. The essay, some of whose more trenchant passages were removed from the second edition, roused much antagonism, because it criticised as frankly immoral many of the current Evangelical theories of the Atonement, in particular that which regarded God as being appeased by the sufferings undergone by Christ in our stead.[1]

In the short essay, "The Imputation of the Sin of Adam," Jowett brings his power of critical analysis to bear upon one of the central doctrines of traditional theology. Original sin, what is it? what is the scriptural basis of the doctrine? He shows how slender is the foundation for the belief in the New Testament; how the two passages in St. Paul's writings on which it rests are of uncertain interpretation;[2] how in dealing with the subject the Apostle is using the thought and speech of his age and country, and how we cannot take these as an infallible oracle for our own day. A vast theological fabric has been raised upon a foundation which critical investigation proves to be unsound. Between Biblical statement and doctrinal interpretation a great gulf looms. Hence there is urgent need for revision and reconstruction, so that the essential truth may be disentangled from its local and temporary wrappings. "The figure of the Apostle bears the impress of his own age and country; the interpretation of the figure is for every age, and for the whole world. A figure of speech it remains still, an allegory after the manner of that age and country, but yet with no uncertain or ambiguous signification. It means that 'God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth'; and that 'he hath concluded all under sin, that he may have mercy upon all.' It means a truth deep yet simple . . . that we are one in a common evil nature, which, if it be not derived from the sin of Adam, exists as really as if it were. It means that we shall be made one in Christ, by the grace of God, in a measure here, more fully and perfectly in another world. It means that Christ is the natural head of the human race, the author of its spiritual life."[3] I am inclined to think that of

[1] For a brief criticism of Jowett's views on the Atonement, cp. ch. xxi., Note I.

[2] Rom. v. 12–21; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45–49.

[3] Vol. ii. pp. 315–6.

all the essays in the volume this is one of the acutest and most illuminating. It clearly reveals the principles of Jowett's critical method, it shows him to be a master of analysis, and it disposes of the charge sometimes brought against him that he destroyed without reconstructing.

We shall be in a better position to judge of Jowett's work as a whole, when we have discussed *Essays and Reviews*. Meanwhile we can see how he treats the Epistles as literature, seeks to make St. Paul a living person and his own interpreter, and pleads the cause of a progressive theology which should welcome criticism as bringing with it an access of new power and life.

2. The same period saw traditional theology confronted with an attack from the side of philosophy. In Oxford there was a growing interest in the study of Hegel. For a time, perhaps, and in some quarters, Hegelianism was welcomed, as it had been on its first appearance in Germany, as a powerful ally to faith, and as providing a means for rehabilitating essential Christian doctrine, by showing how such doctrine was capable of a profound speculative rendering.[1] But it was quickly seen that this philosophy was a solvent of, rather than an aid to, faith; or, if not a completely disintegrating influence, yet a mode of thought which pressed hardly upon historical Christianity, and must compel a revision of many of its most cherished beliefs.

A more definite attack was delivered from the side of

[1] A striking passage occurs in Mark Pattison's *Memoirs*. It is from an article contributed by him to *Mind* (vol. i.), "Sketch of Philosophy in Oxford in the Nineteenth Century": "What is curious is that this new *a priori* metaphysic, whoever gave it birth in Germany, was imported into Oxford by a staunch Liberal, the late Professor Green. This anomaly can only be accounted for by a certain puzzle-headedness on the part of the Professor, who was removed from the scene before he had time to see how eagerly the Tories began to carry off his honey to their hive."

This Tory theft refers, I presume, to the eagerness with which some orthodox theologians welcomed Hegelianism, as providing a defence of such an important Christian doctrine as that of the Trinity; but I have sometimes wondered whether the passage may not contain an allusion to the use which sacramentarians might make of the Hegelian thought of immanence, in teaching a localised presence of deity in the consecrated bread and wine. Hegelianism had begun to filter through into Oxford before Green officially taught it. Nor was it by any means universally welcomed. Mansel, among others, viewed it with the utmost alarm.

psychology. Two names in this connection deserve mention. In 1855 appeared Alexander Bain's *The Senses and the Intellect*, a book based on James Mill's *Analysis of the Human Mind*, and carrying still further the use of the principle of association to explain mental structure and development. The broad effect of the volume was twofold. It exhibited the intimate connection of mind with the nervous structure of the brain; and showed that mind in man was a complex growth out of elements which existed lower down in the scale of creation. It raised for the theologian important questions. If mind depended upon brain, what of immortality? Could personality survive the dissolution of the cerebral structure? If mind was a gradual growth out of lower elements, what meaning was to be attached to the word "soul"? Had man any special spiritual endowment which justified theologians in regarding him as made in the divine image? Questions like these had to be faced. The issue between the rival claims of theology and science, of spirit and matter, came rapidly to the front.

In the same year Herbert Spencer published *The Principles of Psychology*. An ardent evolutionist before Darwin, he utilised in this volume the principle of evolution to explain the development of the human mind. The whole tendency of the book was to destroy man's spiritual prerogative by emphasizing the mental kinship which existed between him and the lower animals. In addition, the author sought to strengthen the attack of empiricism upon intuitionism, by invoking the aid of heredity. The intuitionist held that the mind grasped by immediate intuition necessary truths, such as the axioms of geometry or the first principles of morals. Mill had tried to show that repeated experience could explain the presence of such beliefs. Spencer suggested that the range of experience could be almost indefinitely expanded by the aid of heredity, and that these so-called intuitions were the product of a long ancestral experience whose results had been registered in the brain and transmitted from one generation to another. We are not called on here to criticise this view, or to show how its author failed to make good his contention. What concerns us is the broad fact that evolutionary teaching of this kind was bound to come into collision with current theological beliefs. It took some time before theologians learned to understand the

meaning of evolution, before they distinguished between origin and validity, or began critically to investigate the presuppositions of an evolutionary philosophy.

3. It is impossible here to attempt even to summarise the progress of science in the middle of the century. I confine myself therefore to the mention of two or three lines of scientific advance which created difficulties for theology. In the first place, physico-chemical explanations of life were rapidly gaining ground. Older theories of vitalism were giving way before them, and the claim was put forward that mental phenomena would be found amenable to the same treatment. The cellular theory of Schleiden and Schwann revolutionised biology by making the cell the unit both for morphology and embryology.[1] The foundation was thus laid for accurate research into the structure and growth of organic tissues. The fundamental identity of all living structure was established, and its development was shown to be controlled, at any rate in part, by physico-chemical forces.

In the second place, exact methods of research began now to be applied to all physiological phenomena, and particularly to the mechanism of the senses. Here the names of Johannes Müller and the brothers Weber hold the place of honour. Müller was Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in Berlin from 1833 to 1858. Through the influence of himself and his pupils physiological laboratories were established throughout Germany. His *Elements of Physiology* (1837–40), which was translated into English in 1842, marks a new departure in the history of the subject. His inquiries into the nervous mechanism of the senses established what is known as the "law of specific energies," or the doctrine that the kind of sensation experienced does not depend on the nature of the irritation or stimulus applied to the nerve-end, but depends on the nature of the sense-organs.[2] The three brothers, Ernest,

[1] Matthias Schleiden, Professor of Botany at Jena, propounded about 1838 his views as to the cellular structure of plants. Theodor Schwann about the same time extended the theory to animal organisms.

[2] Lewes and Wundt have criticised this theory, opposing to it the doctrine of the functional indifference of the nerves. Nerve substance, they maintain, is chemically uniform. Differences in sensation are due to differences of rhythm in the applied stimuli.

William, and Edward Weber, carried still further this investigation into the mechanism of the senses, and showed how the principle of exact measurement could be applied even to mental phenomena. To them is due the rise of the special study of psycho-physics, which may be described as the attempt to reach the quantitative aspect of mental facts, and to apply definite standards of measurement to the relation between the physical stimulus and the resulting psychical change. The importance of this line of investigation for theology is obvious. It raised the whole problem of the connection between the mental and the physical. Could mental life be brought under the range of mechanical explanations? Was there any truth, or indeed any meaning, in describing the life of mind as a product of nervous energy? What line of defence should the theologian take in meeting the attack of a materialistic, or quasi-materialistic, science? One conclusion quickly established itself, that only by the aid of philosophy could theology hope satisfactorily to hold its own. The attack of science led to a change in the method of theological apologetics, and the outlook of the theologian was proportionately broadened. A different aspect of the same quarrel is seen in the rise of the doctrine of the conservation of energy, or the correlation of physical forces.[1] The doctrine seemed to leave no room for any divine interference from without with the established course of nature. The universe appeared to be a self-contained system, possessed of a definite amount of energy which could be neither increased nor diminished. No place was left for miracle, or special providence, or petitionary prayer. Freedom was an illusion; a rigid uniformity of operation everywhere obtained. The claim of spirit was overmatched by the claim of matter and force.

Mention here must be made of Baden Powell as one who, though he was a clergyman of the Church of England, fully accepted the teaching of science. Not only did he extend a warm welcome to the evolutionary hypothesis, asserting of the views expressed in the *Origin of Species* that they would bring about a revolution in favour of "the grand principle of the self-

[1] Grove and Joule were the formulators of this doctrine; cp. Grove's lectures on the *Correlation of the Physical Forces*, 1842–3. Joule's work (1841–7) appears to have been almost unnoticed, until he became acquainted with Thomson (Lord Kelvin). Cp. Merz, *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, to which I am indebted for considerable help.

evolving powers of nature,"[1] but he was a strenuous upholder of the doctrine of uniformity. No breach, he maintained, was possible in the regular sequences of the natural order. In the orderliness of nature he saw evidences of the working of the divine mind which could not be impugned. The basis of theism, he says, is left untouched by the abandonment of the belief in miracles. Strict philosophical reasoning may not, indeed, lead to the conclusion that God is a moral Personality (we have other grounds, he urges, for asserting that), but the passage from order to mind is absolutely valid, for "the order of physical causes is a dependence of ideas in reason, a series of relations existing in nature, and independent of our conception of it."[2] Evolution, again, he felt, so far from destroying the argument from design, supported it, though it overthrew the teleology of Paley. Baden Powell was one of the very few theologians who were imbued with a scientific spirit, and were friendly to science. That theology should welcome all new knowledge was a cardinal article of his faith.

4. The Gorham Judgment exercised a liberalising influence. The trial of the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham (1849–50) is important for two reasons. It was the first case involving the question of clerical liberty in doctrinal matters to come before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, as the supreme court of appeal. The hearing of it led the court to lay down rules of procedure and principles of interpretation which have been followed ever since in all similar cases. And the judgment given directed attention to the comprehensiveness of the formularies of the Church, and made for greater freedom in the interpretation of the terms of subscription. The story of the case may be very briefly recalled. In 1847 the Lord Chancellor offered Mr. Gorham the living of Bramford Speke in the diocese of Exeter, but Bishop Phillpotts refused to institute him, though he was already a beneficed clergyman in his diocese, on the ground that his views upon baptism were not those of the Church of England. The Bishop conducted a lengthy exa-

[1] "The Study of the Evidences of Christianity," in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 167 (twelfth edition, 1869).

[2] "The Study of the Evidences of Natural Theology," in *Oxford Essays* (1857), p. 183; cp. also *The Order of Nature*, as showing the basis of his theism.

mination of Mr Gorham, and, being dissatisfied with the answers which he obtained to his questions, persisted in his refusal to institute. Mr. Gorham appealed to the Court of Arches against the Bishop, but lost his case, the court deciding in 1848 that the appellant "has maintained and does maintain opinions opposed to that Church of which he professes himself a member and minister." Mr. Gorham then took his case to the Judicial Committee, who reversed (1850) the decision given in the lower court. The point at issue in the controversy turned on the meaning to be attached to baptismal regeneration. Was it absolute, or was it conditional? Mr. Gorham's view was that regeneration does not necessarily take place in baptism, but the grace may be given before, in, or after baptism: and that the grace is not given in baptism unless the sacrament is worthily received. In no case is regeneration unconditional. Worthy reception involves faith and repentance which infants show through their sponsors, and adults in their own persons. Further, since all men are born in sin, we must suppose an act of prevenient grace to make infants capable of being worthy recipients of baptism. But we cannot dogmatically affirm that the grace is given in the baptism of every infant. If there are declarations in the Prayer Book which seem to make that assertion, they must be construed as expressions of charity and hope, like the assertions in the Burial Service.

The court, in pronouncing judgment, laid down the following important principles and rules of procedure.[1] (*a*) It was not the duty of the judges to decide whether the appellant's views were doctrinally sound or unsound, but only whether they were contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England as set forth in her Articles, Rubrics, and Formularies. (*b*) "In all cases in which the Articles considered as a test admit of different interpretations, it must be held that any sense of which the words fairly admit may be allowed, if that sense be not contradictory to something which the Church has elsewhere allowed or required." (*c*) "If there be any doctrine on which the Articles are silent or ambiguously expressed, so as to be capable of two meanings, we must suppose that it was intended

[1] Cp. Brodrick and Fremantle, *A Collection of the Judgments of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Ecclesiastical Cases*, pp. 89–102.

to leave that doctrine to private judgment, unless the Rubrics and Formularies *clearly* and *distinctly* state it." (*d*) In interpreting the Articles and Liturgy the court applies "the same principles of construction which are by law applicable to all written instruments, assisted only by such external or historical facts as it may find necessary to enable it to understand the subject-matter to which the instruments relate, and the meaning of the words employed."

The judges found that Mr. Gorham's views were not repugnant to, or contradictory of, the doctrine of the Church. They pointed out that the Articles did not clearly state what was the distinct meaning and effect of the grace of regeneration, or what was signified by right reception; and that of the Prayer Book, while some parts were plainly dogmatic, others were instructional or devotional, and that "devotional expressions, involving assertions, must not as of course be taken to bear an absolute and unconditional sense." "Our principal attention has been given to the Baptismal Services; and those who are strongly impressed with the earnest prayers which are offered for the Divine blessing, and the grace of God, may not unreasonably suppose that the grace is not necessarily tied to the rite; but that it ought to be earnestly and devoutly prayed for, in order that it may then, or when God pleases, be present to make the rite beneficial."

The judgment was a victory for the Evangelical party, to which Gorham belonged, and created consternation among High Churchmen. But it was much more than a mere party victory. It was a distinct step forward in the direction of doctrinal liberty. F. W. Robertson, while disagreeing with the views on baptism of both the Bishop of Exeter and Mr. Gorham, approved of the liberty of opinion which the judgment allowed. "I do *not* think Mr. Gorham's view the view of the Church of England; but I think it is not irreconcilable with it, and should be very sorry to see the Church pledged to a narrow form of thought which would exclude such shades of opinion."[1]

It must always remain a matter for regret that *Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology*, by Frederic Myers, was not

[1] *Life and Letters*, edited by Stopford Brooke, 2 vols. (third edition, 1866), vol. ii. pp. 68–9.

made generally accessible to the public during the life of the author. It was privately printed and circulated in 1848, while the writer was in charge of St. John's Church, Keswick, a post which he held from 1838 till his death in 1851, but it was not publicly issued till 1874. Of the extent of its private circulation we have no means of judging, but its influence does not seem to have been great, though far-seeing thinkers like Bishop Ewing highly appreciated its significance. When it did finally become public property, it had largely lost its prophetic character. Many of the principles for which Myers contended had, through the march of events in the intellectual world, won recognition. The volume, therefore, inevitably appeared less fresh and stimulating than would have been the case had it seen the light fifteen or twenty years earlier. I treat of it in this chapter, because it belongs to that stream of liberalising influences which were gradually transforming English theology.

The book is a remarkable one, and well repays study even to-day. It combines a devout temper and a strong religious reverence for the Bible with a broad, rational outlook, and an insight into the tendency of the deeper forces which were moulding the spirit of the age. Myers saw clearly two things; first, that existing ecclesiastical controversies would not long continue to interest thoughtful minds, but would give place to problems of a profounder kind. The area of controversy was being changed by the advent of historical criticism. Secondly, he saw that the coming changes would press with peculiar hardness on English theology, which he describes as being "textual, verbal, every way literal, beyond all others: not simply based upon Biblical principles, but chiefly constructed of Biblical elements."[1] A theology so rigid in its framework, so insular in its outlook, was bound to come into sharp collision with the new ways of thinking.

The volume, which formed part of a series of *Present-Day Papers on Prominent Questions on Theology*, consists of two divisions. The former treats of the Bible, the latter of Theology. We may briefly examine both.

(*a*) The key to the writer's views upon inspiration, revelation, and kindred problems is the impossibility of making any

[1] Preface, p. xv. (edition 1879).

clear-cut line of separation between human and divine. The two are inextricably blended, not only in the Bible itself, but in the life of the individual and in the whole development of human history. None can say where the one begins or the other ends. The influence of the divine is everywhere present. Hence an intuition of truth need not differ from a revelation of it: man's discovery may fairly be regarded as God's unveiling of Himself. But, if this is the case, then it is impossible to defend the mechanical view of inspiration which was generally accepted at the time, a view which attributed to the Bible a divinity and authority to which it makes no claim itself. No one could be further than Myers from humanism or rationalism. He describes his own view of the Bible as "intermediate between the Literal and the Rational." No one had a profounder sense of the presence and activity of God in all human life. But he pleaded for larger views of the divine operation. He would characterise it as providential rather than miraculous, as dynamic and progressive, moving to ends of which we could form only a dim conception. The Bible deals with the history of but a single nation; it must, he felt, be brought into relation with universal history. Not all that it contains is revealed. It is not itself a revelation, but the record of a revelation, written down by fallible men. And it is not the record of a single revelation, but of a series of such, culminating in the Person of Christ, whose character and teaching must always remain the final standard by which we judge of the earlier stages of the movement. This thought of a progressive revelation, adjusted to the growing capacity of man to receive the truth, underlies Myers's whole treatment of the Bible. His views are familiar enough at the present day. But in the middle of the nineteenth century there were few in England who held them, and fewer still who had the courage to announce them.

(*b*) In the second part of the volume Myers points out that there can be no strict science of theology. Our idea of God is too indefinite, and our knowledge of human history too imperfect, for us to hope to frame any systematic exposition of the relations between God and man. The revelation contained in the Bible, which provides the materials out of which Biblical theology is constructed, is not only incomplete, throwing no

light upon many problems which are of primary interest to us, but is entirely unsystematic in form. Attempts to systematise it (and Myers recognises that the human mind demands that such attempts shall be made) are permissible, only if two considerations are kept in view. First, a distinction must be drawn between the products of human speculation and the truths embodied in the original revelation. The former ought never to claim the reverence which is rightly due to the latter. Biblical theology can legitimately go no further than the revelation which forms its base. Secondly, the progressive character of theology must be frankly recognised. As human thought changes, and new knowledge is won, theology must adjust itself to the altered conditions. There can therefore be no finality in theological construction. English theology, as Myers saw, was suffering from narrowness and the dominance of past scholastic modes of thought. He wished to broaden its foundations, and inform it with a new temper. "We must make the base of our theology as broad and deep as Fact and Truth of all kinds, and build it up with materials as everlasting as the experiences and necessities and aspirations of the human soul."[1]

But if we are to distinguish between theology and revelation, between the human construction and the divine *datum*, we must also distinguish, says Myers, between theology and religion. "Religion is a spirit—Theology only a creed."[2] Religion is not committed to any system of theology. The appeal of the Bible is to character and conscience. The Old Testament, he points out, knows nothing of formal theology, nor does the teaching of Jesus. It is true that in the apostolical writings doctrine holds a prominent place, but the most doctrinal portions of the Epistles have reference to the special circumstances of the Jews. Where they are most catholic in their appeal they are most unsystematic. But religion for Myers is something far more than a mere, vague sentiment. Christianity looks to a historical Person as its centre. The truth which is personalised in Christ is indeed truth, and demands the use of reason, if it is to be apprehended. But it is the truth of principle, rather than truth of dogma. The principle has to be applied to life, and in the process of this perpetual application it will shape for itself its own appropriate embodiments. The

[1] *Catholic Thoughts*, p. 187. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

duty of the Christian teacher is to bring men to Christ, rather than to teach traditional dogma, and to make His mind the standard for all theological inquiry. He, says Myers, is the best teacher who, blending new and old together, can reveal amid the ever-changing conditions of thought and circumstance a core of unchanging truth. Finally, Myers deals with the question of Christian evidences and with the traditional arguments from miracle and prophecy. The evidential value of miracles, he holds, has been unduly exaggerated. The revelation supports the miracle as much as the miracle the revelation. As to prophecy, he points out "the utter insufficiency and essential unsoundness of the more popular views of Prophecy." His own view is given in the following words:—"Sometimes it may be otherwise, but generally it is true, that Prophecy in Scripture is not to be conceived under the form of an Image of History thrown from the Future upon the Present; but rather under that of a germinant principle continually reproducing itself in the Future."[3] In the organic movement of prophecy Myers found the best illustration of the principle of development which he would fain apply to theology as a whole.

The death in 1853 of Frederick W. Robertson, at the early age of 37, was a severe blow to the cause of liberal theology. If, as has been said of him, no life better mirrors the spiritual conflicts of the fifth decade of the century, it is equally true that no teacher has more wisely shown how the mental unrest caused by changing conditions of thought may be met. In his brief ministry at Trinity Chapel, Brighton (1847–53) Robertson exhibited not only a striking courage in dealing with problems and situations where party feeling ran high, but an insight into the deeper needs of his age, and a profound grasp of essential principles, which gave him a unique place among the religious teachers of the century. He may best be described as resembling the householder of sacred parable who brought forth from his treasury things new and old. To welcome the new, and yet retain what was vital in the old, to blend new and old together in living union, this was his aim, and his achievement. No man better understood what the development of truth meant, or was more alive to the need for a progressive theology. Who can measure what his influence might have been had

[1] *Catholic Thoughts*, p. 311.

he lived longer? As it is, both as teacher and preacher (and it is the intimate combination of the two functions which characterises him) he has proved himself one of the most potent forces in the recent history of English theology.

It is worth while to recall some of the leading principles which he laid down as those which he tried to follow out in thought and action.[1] (*a*) Teaching should be suggestive rather than dogmatic, for spiritual truth is discerned by a man's whole spiritual being, and not alone by his intellect. (*b*) Truth is made up of two opposite propositions, and is not to be found in a *via media* between them. (*c*) The object of the teacher should be the establishment of positive truth, rather than the negative repression of error. Error can only be destroyed by planting a positive truth in its place. (*d*) There is a soul of goodness in things evil. (*e*) Belief in the divine character of Christ's humanity is antecedent to belief in its divine origin. (*f*) From within outwards is the method which Christianity follows; the same method should be adopted by the Christian teacher. A study of his sermons proves that he carried out these principles into practice. We find in them the key to his life and work. Let us examine them somewhat more closely.

Robertson did not despise dogma; he saw that it was necessary. But he saw equally clearly that no dogmatic presentation of spiritual truth ever exhausted the full significance of the truth. It could, therefore, never be final. Dogmatic statements must always be liable to revision in the light of growing knowledge. Theology in his day was suffering from the bane of party-spirit, and party-spirit feeds upon catchwords and stereotyped definitions. What it needed was just the assertion of principle in place of dogma, the presentation of living truth which, as it took root in the minds of men, should shape for itself its own expression. Robertson never let go the vision of the universality and progressive nature of Christian truth. Hence he could never teach any clear-cut scheme of doctrine, as something which his hearers had to swallow whole. Doctrinal teaching abounds in his sermons, and it is the very opposite of vague and misty, but the doctrines taught are always set forth in their organic relation to life, and as embodying principles which are capable of more than one interpreta-

[1] *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 102, 106, 160–1.

tion. He loved to suggest rather than define. His object was to bring his hearer into the presence of the living truth, and there leave him, so that, while he absorbed the truth, the truth might absorb him.

Vagueness of belief is the last indictment which can be brought against Robertson, because at the centre of his creed lay his conviction of the truth of the Incarnation. In the divine-human life of Christ he found a sure foundation for thought and action. The one object of his untiring devotion was to bring the teaching and spirit of Christ to bear upon the problems of individual, social, and national existence. For him Christ held the solution of the mysteries of our human lot. He was Way, Truth, Life.[1] But the spirit was more than the letter. Just because Christ's teaching was undogmatic in form and universal in range, as befitted a revelation made for all time, he felt that the application of that teaching must vary with the varying conditions of human thought and circumstance. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Robertson understood well the meaning of those words. His attitude was one of search into the wealth of Christ's teaching, search for new developments of principles laid down there in germ, for fresh applications in his own time of truths which were in themselves eternal. And no teacher of the century, not even Maurice, has more powerfully set forth Christ as the Master of the souls of men, and as a centre of unity, in whom the differences which separate us may be reconciled, by being taken up into a wider and more embracing truth.

But in his presentation of Christ Robertson insisted that we must begin with His humanity and from thence pass to His divinity. The reason for this is not difficult to discover. It is to be found in his dislike of dogmatic teaching. The dogma of Christ's divinity might be thrust down a man's throat, but there was no guarantee that it had been converted into a living truth. Only one road, said Robertson, was open to the man who wished to be convinced of the truth of the divinity of Christ, and that

[1] Hort's Hulsean Lectures *The Way, The Truth, and The Life* breathe throughout a spirit very similar to that which animated Robertson. They show the same sense of the organic nature of truth, the same appreciation of the conditions necessary for its apprehension, the same conviction that all ways of truth meet in Christ.

was the road of fellowship with Christ. Live as Christ lived, think as Christ thought, enter into His character, aims, ideals, and you will reach the conclusion that the category of manhood alone will not explain Him. But for this a study of His humanity is essential. There must be a sympathetic appreciation of His human life, as it was lived out in the cities and villages, and among the men, of Palestine. "That Divinity of His," he once said in a sermon, "is made the pass-key by which we open all mysteries with fatal facility, and save ourselves from thinking of them. We get a dogma and cover truth with it: we satisfy ourselves with saying Christ was God, and lose the precious humanities of His heart and life."[1] His own remarkable power of personal sympathy with the feelings and difficulties of others enabled him thus vividly to realise the humanity of Christ. This was the natural basis upon which his higher life of loyalty and devotion was built.

That the method of the Christian teacher should be the establishment of positive truth rather than the destruction of negative error every one would probably be ready to admit. Yet in practice it is easy to forget the maxim, and the history of theological controversy shows plainly that the refutation of an opponent, rather than the discovery of essential truth, has too often been the object of the combatants. To try merely to uproot error, says Robertson, is to make not "converts to Christ, but only controversialists." Beneath all our doctrinal differences lies a truth more fundamental of which those differences are but partial expressions. This is what he meant when he said that truth was made up of opposite propositions, and did not consist in a *via media* between them. The sermon on "The Glory of the Virgin Mother" is a good illustration of the principle which he was advocating. Here he argues that the presence and persistence of Mariolatry are proof that the doctrine of the worship of the Virgin has a root in truth. That truth he finds in the emphasis laid by Christ on the graces of character which are distinctively feminine, meekness, obedience, affection, purity. The false dogma must, indeed, be attacked, but it is not enough to destroy it. It will crop up again, if positive truth is not substituted for it. "Now the truth which alone can supplant the worship of the Virgin is the perfect

[1] *Sermons* (second series), "The Good Shepherd."

humanity of Jesus Christ." It is better, he thinks, to speak of Christ's humanity than of His manhood. The latter term may easily lend itself to a too narrow connotation. In combating the view that truth is to be found in a *via media* between two opposite propositions Robertson wished to warn men against the danger of watering down truth, and of being content with a superficial compromise, which would leave those who accepted it on the outside of truth instead of at its heart. Christian truth, he felt, was so rich that it must of necessity express itself in differing, and often opposed, ways. The true method of reconciling these differences lay, not in making an artificial amalgam between them, accepting one fragment from this side and another from that, but in penetrating to a principle deeper and more comprehensive which, while it explained the origin of the differences, welded them into a higher unity.

Robertson's ministry was a living commentary upon the method just described. Men of all classes and opinions found in him a friend and a guide. It was not merely, though it was largely, his personality and sympathy which attracted them. But they were drawn to him because they felt that he had reached a position above and beyond their difficulties, and so could show them how they might be overcome. In an epoch when party-cries resounded, when violent antagonisms were aroused by the conflict between traditional theology and new knowledge, Robertson stood out as a reconciler and mediator. This is, perhaps, his chief title to fame. Could there be a nobler one for a Christian minister? The truth which is in Christ is nothing, if it is not truth which comprehends, and in comprehending transmutes into something higher, all lesser truths wherever they may be found.

Finally, in all his teaching Robertson emphasized the principle that spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. There must be the eye for spiritual things. Obedience was the road to conviction. Only the pure in heart could see God. Much of the force of his preaching was due to his power of penetrating to the spiritual needs of the human heart, and showing how they could be met in Christ. He was a great exponent in the pulpit of the spiritualities of the Christian religion. There is always a danger that the dogmatic teacher shall appeal primarily to the intellect, and the danger is never more acute than when

dogmatic differences sharply divide men. Robertson defended two contentions. He insisted, first, that truth enters the mind of man by other avenues than that of the intellect alone, though it can never reach full expression until the intellect has made it a subject for conscious reflection. Secondly, he pointed out the folly of trying to impose truth from without upon the mind by authoritative declarations. Truth must ripen from within, growing with the learner's mental growth, and vindicating itself by its own inherent persuasiveness. The authority of the Church, therefore, was for him no fetich to be blindly worshipped. It represented the summarised experience of the Christian community which, just because it was a product of growth in the past, was liable to modification and revision in the future. Robertson could never separate truth from life. Christian dogma found its justification in Christian living.

None of the ordinary party labels can be affixed to Robertson. Originally a staunch adherent of the Evangelical school, he broke away from them after a spiritual crisis whose severity was known only to himself, and which left upon his character a permanent mark. Yet, despite his intellectual breach with the party, he retained to the end the impress of Evangelicalism. In his view of personal religion, in his opposition to sacerdotalism, in his insistence that in Christ each individual soul may find its light and life, he is Evangelical. But his personal and historical sympathies were too large to allow of his being called a party man. Living when he did, it was inevitable that much of his life should be spent in conflict. And possessed as he was of a highly sensitive nervous organisation, it was further inevitable that the conflict should cause him acute pain. He found himself compelled to run counter to many of the prevailing religious and theological opinions of the day. Thus, he roused fierce antagonism by his attack on a narrow Sabbatarianism.[1] The Bibliolaters, who still formed the majority, were scandalised by his views on inspiration.[2] He was held up to scorn as a Socialist because of his sympathy with the working man and his desire to bring the teaching of Christ to bear upon the problems of industrial and social life.[3] His views on baptism

[1] *Life and Letters*, vol. i. pp. 258–60; vol. ii. pp. 111–18.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 275–6 and 229–30.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. ch. i.

offended both Evangelicals and High Churchmen.[1] And so he went through life, oppressed with a sense of loneliness, and largely misunderstood. But "he being dead yet speaketh," and his message of reconciliation is the very message which our own age needs.

The new influences which were to reshape theology in the latter half of the century were steadily and irresistibly making headway. But their advance was met at every turn by a determined opposition on the part of the majority of the clergy, who raised the cry, that the Bible, the Church, nay, Christianity itself, were in danger of utter destruction. The defensive policy adopted showed, for the most part, a spirit of prejudice and an incapacity for taking large views of the situation, and need not be described. Only one attempt to stem the rising tide calls for some mention.

In 1859 Mansel delivered his Bampton Lectures, once famous, now hardly ever read, on *The Limits of Religious Thought*. His object was to put faith above the reach of criticism, and to defend Christian dogma by a method which was an extension of that adopted by Butler in the *Analogy*. Butler had argued that the difficulties in the scheme of the Christian revelation could be matched by analogous difficulties in the scheme of nature. God's government proceeded in both cases on the same broad principles. But if the difficulties in the latter case were allowed not to be sufficient to disprove the truth of a divine ordering of the world, why should similar objections in the other case be held to disprove the truth of revelation? Mansel's extension of this argument took the form of trying to show that the difficulties involved in the central doctrines of Christianity found a parallel in the difficulties experienced by philosophy when it set out to investigate the nature of God.

[1] The two sermons on baptism (2nd series) explain his view, which, shortly put, was that baptism does not make the child a child of God, but declares him to be such; cp. vol. ii. p. 68 of the *Life:* "Baptism is therefore an authoritative symbol of an eternal fact; a truth of eternity realised in time, and brought down to the limits of 'then and there': then and there made God's child: but it is only the realisation of a fact true before baptism, and without baptism; the personal realisation of a fact which belongs to all humanity, and was revealed by Christ."

Mansel starts by asserting that no religious philosophy is possible until we have made a preliminary investigation into the capacity of the human mind for philosophising at all. There must be a critique of the instrument by which you propose to investigate before you can begin to investigate with any hope of reaching sound conclusions. Now such a critique reveals at once this fundamental fact, that to think is to condition. To think an object implies that it is related to other objects and to the self which knows it. Mansel here avows himself the disciple of Hamilton, who insisted, in his *Philosophy of the Conditioned*, that all knowledge was relative. But the Infinite and the Absolute, the conceptions which philosophy applies to God, cannot be the subject of conditions; otherwise they would cease to be Infinite and Absolute. Philosophers and theologians, says Mansel, have involved themselves in a mass of contradictions and absurdities in trying to define the being of God and His relation to the world; and he proceeds to show how self-destructive are some of the principal terms and conceptions which they use. The Infinite, he asserts, can never be a positive object of human thought. It is a negation of thought; it is "merely a name for the absence of those conditions under which thought is possible."[1] What God is in Himself human reason can, therefore, never grasp. No religious metaphysic can be constructed; we can never by searching discover God.

What, then, is left us if reason thus fails? Faith and Revelation, answers Mansel. We are to take on trust what God has chosen to reveal of Himself, and we must remain true to those religious intuitions which He has implanted in our nature. "It is our duty to think of God as personal; and it is our duty to believe that He is infinite."[2] What involves contradictions for ourselves need not do so for God. We carry within us, says Mansel, a double witness to God's existence. On the one hand, there is the feeling of dependence; on the other, the conviction of duty or moral obligation which, if it is analysed, leads to the belief in a moral law-giver. In addition, there is the witness without us, the revelation which God has given in Christ and the Bible. But how, if reason is thus incapacitated in its search

[1] *The Limits of Religious Thought*, p. 72 (2nd ed.).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

for ultimate truth, can we know a revelation to be such, or how can we distinguish a true from a spurious revelation? Mansel replies that we must investigate the evidences of the revelation. One of the needs of the time, he thinks, is the restoration of the study of external evidences to its rightful place. "The legitimate object of a rational criticism of revealed religion is not to be found in the *contents* of that religion, but in its *evidences*." [1] If the evidences, when duly weighed and taken together, satisfy us that the revelation is from God, then we must accept it in its entirety. To criticise its contents in any one particular is to set human reason above God.[2] We may not even criticise supposed divine commands in the Old Testament which offend our moral sense, the command, for example, to exterminate the Canaanites, or the injunction to Abraham to slay his son. We must remember, urges Mansel, that human morality is relative, and that we have no means of judging what right and wrong signify to God.

Faith, then, is above reason, and moves in a region which the speculative intellect cannot traverse. If we will but recognise the limitations of the human mind, we can place the Christian revelation in a position where it will be secure from all hostile attack.

The publication of the lectures at once aroused the anger of Maurice, who subjected them to a searching criticism.[3] Mansel's position was a denial of all that Maurice held most dear, and for which he had most earnestly contended. For him the knowledge of God was not only possible, but was the root and condition of all other knowledge. As his biographer points out,[4] he had himself, in his early days, experienced all the difficulties about the Infinite, of which Mansel made so much; but had been saved from doubt by his conviction that in the Incarnation God had revealed Himself in His essential character.

[1] *Limits of Religious Thought*, p. 234.

[2] Cp. p. 180: "If there is sufficient evidence, on other grounds, to show that the Scriptures, in which this doctrine is contained, are a Revelation from God, the doctrine itself must be unconditionally received, not as reasonable, nor as unreasonable, but as scriptural."

[3] Cp. *What is Revelation?* 1859. To this Mansel replied in the same year in *An Examination of the Rev. F. D. Maurice's Strictures on the Bampton Lectures of* 1858. Maurice renewed the attack in the *Sequel to the Inquiry*, "*What is Revelation?*" 1860.

[4] *Life*, vol. ii. chh. ix. and x.

Further, Maurice saw that Mansel's attitude, if it were generally adopted, could only lead to a fatal divorce between theology and advancing knowledge. Death must quickly overtake English theology if the clergy were to enrol themselves as Mansel's disciples.

Mansel's doctrine led straight to agnosticism. Herbert Spencer's defence in the next decade of the Unknowable, as the last term of human thought and the supreme object of worship, was a logical development of the argument of these lectures. "I had not expected," said an old Oxford don, "to live to hear atheism preached from the pulpit of the University."[1] One wonders how an able man like Mansel could have been so blind to the defects of his own reasoning. If we can by the use of reason know nothing of the essential being of God, how can we, as Mansel does, predicate even existence of Him? And if we can have no assurance that human morality has any real counterpart in God, what becomes of the argument that conscience witnesses to an eternal law-giver? How, again, are we to make our preliminary inquiry into the capacity of human reason, when the only organ with which you can conduct the inquiry is that very reason itself?

Once more, how can we affirm the complete relativity of all human knowledge? A mind whose knowledge is completely relative could not be aware of its condition, for to speak of relative knowledge implies the contrast with a knowledge which is not relative. In calling knowledge relative we have *ipso facto* transcended its relativity. The unknowable is not the final goal of human thought, but rather the unknown which we progressively grow to understand. The opposition between faith and reason is not the absolute opposition of Mansel's argument. Faith can never be thus divorced from reason, but must make use of reason in establishing its own position. And reason is something more than the bare, logical instrument which Mansel makes it. It is the expression of the whole man. It is human personality in the fulness of its powers, striving by conscious reflection to understand its own nature and that of the world around it. Mansel's argument rests on a basis of false antitheses—faith and reason, natural and revealed religion, the thing-in-itself and its appear-

[1] Cp. Benn, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 112.

ances. This last antithesis is the real root of all his difficulties, as it was of the difficulties of Kant, from whom Hamilton and Mansel derived it. There can be no reality which is not reality for a mind that thinks it. The fact that we do find the universe intelligible, however far we search into its secrets, implies that it and ourselves are reflections of a divine mind which reveals itself in nature and man, and is the ground of both. Thought and Being cannot be thus ruthlessly parted asunder. They find their unity in God. Maurice was right; if we cannot know God, we can know nothing at all.

Mansel, for a time at any rate, was hailed by the Church as a champion and deliverer. The lectures had a wide circulation, and were triumphantly quoted by thousands who never understood the real drift of their arguments, as effectually silencing the critics and doubters. Nor is it surprising that they were thus welcomed, when we remember how the average English theologian of the period had no interest in philosophy, and was content to sit in fancied security within his citadel of tradition. Mark Pattison's account of the condition of clerical learning and intelligence at the time is worth recalling, though it is probably true that he dips his pen in venom somewhat too freely. In an essay entitled "Learning in the Church of England,"[1] published in 1863 in the *National Review*, and suggested by the report of the Church Congress which had been held the year before in Oxford, he writes:—"The High Church clergyman carries with him into everything he does a fatal stereotype of theological opinion. Trained not to employ his reason in his theology, he never thinks of employing it in any other direction."[2] The Anglican party "has a set of borrowed dogmata, but no theology." He points out how the *Literary Churchman*, one of the leading organs of the religious press, is profoundly ignorant of German theology, and has condemned all the leading works of German scholars. "The only exception made is in favour of feeble Roman Catholic manuals, or the books of the clique of Romanising Lutherans who haunt the Court of Berlin."[3] And this attitude is to be the more regretted, since in matters of classical scholar-

[1] Reprinted in *Collected Essays*, vol. ii.
[2] *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. p. 292.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

ship and philology England welcomes German knowledge.[1] Each year sees the increasing want of sympathy between the living thought of Englishmen and the dominant party in the Church. Of opinion there is plenty, of knowledge little. For those, he says, who can see below the surface the prospects of a reconciliation between theology and science or philosophy are more hopeful than ever before, for, Positivism excepted, all influential philosophy is spiritual in tone. But the danger is great, lest the little mental life which still animates the Church shall be crushed out by an unintelligent, mechanical orthodoxy.[2]

We are to see in the next chapter how a further step was taken in the direction of progress and liberty.

We may bring this chapter to a conclusion by a brief reference to John McLeod Campbell's volume on the Atonement, published in 1856,[3] which was certainly the most important English contribution to dogmatic theology made in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century. It may rightly be regarded as having a liberalising influence, because its main purpose was to moralise the doctrine of the Atonement, and to destroy the legal and forensic view of it which was generally current. There is always a danger lest theology should become purely technical and divorced from life. Campbell saw clearly that such a fate had overtaken this doctrine, and he set himself to show, first, that the Atonement must be referred to the Incarnation as its ground, that the death of Christ must be held in close connection with the Person of Christ, and not be treated as an isolated thing; secondly, that, if this connection was emphasized, the doctrine would be filled with such a moral and spiritual meaning as would bring it into living relation with the most intimate religious experiences of the soul.

Campbell's earlier history deserves a word of mention. In 1825 he had become minister of the parish of Row in Dumbartonshire, and while there had roused suspicions as to his orthodoxy. He was troubled at the lack of real religion in his parishioners, and attributed it to the fact that they were

[1] Cp., in the same volume, the essay on "The Present State of Theology in Germany," originally published in 1857 in the *Westminster Review*.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 276.

[3] *The Nature of the Atonement, and its relation to Remission of Sins and Eternal Life.*

not personally assured of God's love in Christ.[1] He therefore made the basis of his teaching the doctrine of assurance by faith, meaning by that the assurance of the objective fact of the divine love. From this he was led on to preach the doctrine of universal atonement; for how, he asked, could any particular individual be assured of the divine love in his own case, unless Christ died for all? The narrow Calvinism of the Scotch Church could not tolerate such teaching. He was charged, quite unjustly, with preaching, on the one hand the impossibility of falling from grace, and on the other antinomianism. He was prosecuted, and driven out of the Church in 1831. In his defence at the trial occurs the following passage:—"If you show me that anything I have taught is inconsistent with the Word of God, I shall give it up, and allow you to regard it as a heresy. . . . If a Confession of Faith were something to stint or stop the Church's growth in light and knowledge, and to say, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further,' then a Confession of Faith would be the greatest curse that ever befell a Church. Therefore I distinctly hold that no minister treats the Confession of Faith right if he does not come with it, as a party, to the Word of God, and consent to stand or fall by the Word of God, and to acknowledge no other tribunal in matters of heresy than the Word of God. In matters of doctrine no lower authority can be recognised than that of God."[2]

Already then, early in his life, he was advocating the claims of a progressive theology, and opposing the static conception of dogmas and formularies.

The volume on the Atonement was the fruit of years of quiet study and reflection. A book so full of thought, and the transcript of a steadily ripening experience, requires more than a hasty perusal if it is to be appreciated. Nor can its teaching be fairly summarised in a few lines. Yet some such summary must be attempted, in order that we may understand what view of the Atonement Campbell proposed to substitute for the traditional theory.

In the first chapter the author tells us that it is his object

[1] For an account of Campbell's early ministry and of the Row Heresy, cp. Tulloch, *op. cit.*, ch. iv.

[2] Quoted from Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

to consider the nature of the Atonement in itself, and the results which it has accomplished, retrospectively in relation to the remission of sins, and prospectively in relation to the hope of eternal life. He begins with the fundamental fact of the Fatherhood of God, as the ground of atonement. Forgiveness, he says, must precede atonement. If we could ourselves make atonement for sin, then such atonement might be thought of as preceding forgiveness, and as the cause of it; but "if God provides the atonement, then forgiveness must precede atonement; and the atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause."[1] With this teaching Scripture agrees, for it asserts that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." He goes on to point out that theologians have usually confined their attention to the retrospective aspect of the Atonement, and have seen its necessity in the fact of our being sinners under the condemnation of a violated moral law. While not denying the truth of such a view, he insists that the sufferings of Christ are not to be regarded as penal. "Let my reader endeavour to realise the thought. The sufferer suffers what He suffers just through seeing sin and sinners with God's eyes, and feeling in reference to them with God's heart. Is such suffering a punishment? Is God, in causing such a divine experience in humanity, inflicting a punishment? There can be but one answer. . . . I find myself shut up to the conclusion, that while Christ suffered for our sins as an atoning sacrifice, what He suffered was not—because from its nature it could not be—a punishment."[2] But, if the suffering was not penal, what was it? It was "the living manifestation of perfect sympathy in the Father's condemnation of sin."[3] Christ, in other words, took the divine point of view in regard to sin, and showed humanity what our sins mean to God. "That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins, take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession as to its own nature must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man."[4] Thus God's righteousness and condemnation of sin is in the

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, p. 18, 3rd ed. 1869. Cp. Introd., p. xvii.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 117. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 132. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

suffering, and is not merely what demands it. God's love also is in the suffering, and is not merely what submits to it.[1] So that the necessity for the Atonement is not simply legal, because we are under the law, but moral and spiritual, arising out of our relation to God as the Father of our spirits. "There is much less spiritual apprehension necessary to the faith that God punishes sin, than to the faith that our sins do truly grieve God. Therefore men more easily believe that Christ's sufferings show how God can punish sin, than that these sufferings are the divine feelings in relation to sin, made visible to us by being present in suffering flesh. Yet, however the former may terrify, the latter alone can purify."[2]

With regard to the prospective aspect of the Atonement in its relation to eternal life, Campbell emphasizes the thought that Christ's attitude to sin must be reproduced in us. Christ revealed the spiritual possibilities of humanity. His righteousness "could never have been accounted of in our favour, or be recognised as 'ours' apart from our capacity of partaking in it; that is to say, apart from its being a righteousness in humanity, and, therefore, for all partaking in humanity."[3] Imputed righteousness, in a word, is wrongly interpreted, if it is made to mean that Christ was our substitute, and that we can be righteous by proxy. Christ is to be thought of, not as a solitary figure, but as the head and representative of humanity, and His righteousness is to pass from Him to men. Men are to die with Christ, and with Him rise to a higher life. The Atonement avails for us only in proportion as we make Christ's attitude to sin our own. The forensic theory of the Atonement sets up an arbitrary connection between Christ's death and our participation in eternal life. The moral theory makes the connection natural, for it teaches us to "think of the eternal life given to us in Christ as that divine life in humanity, in which Christ made atonement for our sins."[4]

Any theory of the Atonement is open to objections, and Campbell's theory may be criticised in two respects. First, it may be questioned whether Christ's relation to God in the matter of human sin can be truly described as taking the form of a perfect confession of our sins. Is there any Scriptural

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, p. 141.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 331–2.
[4] Introd., p. xix.

warrant for such a statement? Is confession quite the right word to use in such a connection? Secondly, as Moberly points out, it may be doubted whether Campbell has sufficiently brought out the complete identification of Christ with humanity which his theory presupposes.[1] That he meant so to identify the two is clear, but has he succeeded in doing so? He has made plain the relation of Christ to God; has he made equally plain the relation of Christ to men? We are not concerned, however, with any detailed discussion of Campbell's theory. It has been mentioned, because his volume is a striking illustration in a particular department of dogmatic theology of the change which was coming over the presentation of Christian doctrine generally. It helped to emphasize the growing need of doctrinal restatement, and enforced the lesson that dogma divorced from experience is a mere empty husk.

[1] Cp. *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 402–410.

CHAPTER XXI

"ESSAYS AND REVIEWS"

THE publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews* marks a turning-point in the history of English theological opinion, not so much because the authors of the volume made any new or specially striking contribution to theology, but because they helped to win for the Church the right of free inquiry. Just as in some limestone district a stream will for a while disappear underground and re-emerge with increased volume, so the liberal movement in theology, which, as we have seen, had been temporarily arrested, now found more vigorous expression, and began to compel universal attention. The essayists saw clearly that a divorce was rapidly taking place between the Church and the intelligence of the nation. New knowledge, religious and secular, was fast accumulating. This must affect theological belief, and it could do so only in one of two ways. Either theology would adjust itself to the changed conditions and so remain a living study, or it would refuse to have anything to do with them, with the inevitable result that the Church of the nation would cease to command the support of the thinkers of the nation. It was to prevent the occurrence of such a catastrophe that the essayists published their volume. Jowett writes of it in a letter to Stanley:—"The object is to say what we think freely within the limits of the Church of England. . . . We do not wish to do anything rash or irritating to the public or the University, but we are determined not to submit to this abominable system of terrorism, which prevents the statement of the plainest facts, and makes true theology or theological education impossible."[1]

That six out of the seven contributors were clergymen of the Church of England, while it heightened their offence in the eyes of their opponents, who charged them with disloyalty to the Church, helped to call attention to the book; for it proved

[1] *Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett*, by Abbott and Campbell, vol. i. p. 275.

that even within the ranks of the clerical body might be found a few who were anxious to infuse a new spirit into theology, and to show that godliness and sound learning were not incompatible.

A short account of each essay follows; and in the case of some of the essayists I have tried to connect their contributions with their earlier writings, so that a clearer view of their general position may be obtained.

The planner and chief promoter of the scheme was Henry Bristow Wilson, vicar of Great Staughton in Huntingdonshire, formerly an Oxford tutor, and Bampton Lecturer in 1851. His Bampton Lectures on *The Communion of Saints* had already given offence and roused suspicion as to his orthodoxy. They anticipate many of the ideas subsequently propounded in the essay on "The National Church." In them he puts forward two pleas, one for a recognition of the provisional character of dogmatic statements in theology, the other for a large comprehensiveness in the terms of official communion in the Church of England. With regard to the first, he urges that Christianity cannot remain unchanged in a constantly changing world. In the past it has varied in doctrine, discipline, and polity, and we must expect that it will do so again in the future. Theology, like everything else, is subject to the law of development. One age cannot impose its dogmas upon its successor, and demand that they shall be received without test or criticism. It is a misleading notion, he insists, that a demonstrative certitude lies at the basis of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. "All dogmatic statements must be held to be modalised by greater or less probability."[1] As for the comprehensive character of the Church of England, that, he contends, is proved by the fact that the clause in the Creed "The Communion of Saints" has been variously interpreted, and no one interpretation has been regarded as legally binding.[2] He pleads for a similar latitude in the matter of ecclesiastical constitution and modes of worship, and puts forward as the only basis for intercommunion the determination of each to honour the differences of the rest. There is a principle of continuity in

[1] From the same writer's essay, "Schemes of Christian Comprehension," in *Oxford Essays*, 1857; cp. *The Communion of Saints*, pp. 113, 115.

[2] *The Communion of Saints*, p. 30.

the Church which Christ founded in perpetuity, but the bond of union must be something which is both universal and dynamic. Transmission is essential, but how, asks Wilson, is it to be conceived? It cannot be conceived under the form of a transmitted grace, for that he finds unthinkable; it must therefore be conceived under the form of a transmission of moral influence.[1] Dogma cannot really unite the members of the Church, for it is always subject to revision and to differences of interpretation. The subjective principle of faith, and the sacramental principle of the Tractarians are equally unsatisfactory. The former leads to individualism, the latter to materialism, or an unintelligible mystery. Only in a moral principle can a living bond of union be found, and it is this alone which will preserve for the layman his rightful place in the Church.

The essay on "The National Church" was a republication in more trenchant fashion of the teaching of the Bampton Lectures, which I have just summarised, though it contained in addition the writer's views upon inspiration. A national Church, Wilson maintains, need not be Christian, or, if it is Christian, it need not be tied down to the forms of the past. If it is to be really national, it must "assist the spiritual progress of the nation," recognising that its members are not all at the same level of faith and intelligence, and preserving a wide comprehensiveness as a security against separatism. It must be progressive, and watch lest "while the civil side of the nation is fluid, the ecclesiastical side of it is fixed."[2] Its main concern must be with the ethical development of its members. Speculative doctrines should be left for the discussion of the philosophical schools. Admission into the national Church should be as free as possible. Every precaution should be taken against the danger of any ecclesiastical hardening which would hinder future growth, and increase, with loss of power to the Church, the number of those who stand outside it. The essayist pleads for the abolition of subscription on the ground that there should not be separate standards of belief for the clergy and the laity, and that promises made at ordination cannot prevent future changes of opinion.[3]

[1] *Communion of Saints*, p. 195. [2] *Essays and Reviews*, p. 208, 12th ed., 1865.

[3] The essay was written before the terms of subscription were modified in 1865, but the modification would not have satisfied Wilson.

With regard to this portion of the essay, Bishop Thirlwall's criticism was surely sound. He points out that the general tendency of Wilson's proposals was to lower the Church to the level of those who hold the minimum of Christian doctrine, and remarks that it is difficult to believe that a Church could maintain itself in being which had no basis of common faith and dogma. "A Church, without any basis of a common faith, is not only an experiment new in practice and of doubtful success, but an idea new in theory, and not easy to conceive."[1]

The essay goes on to deal with inspiration. The writer reminds us that the Article (VI.) treating of the subject does not contain the phrase "word of God," gives no definition of inspiration, and no hint that Scripture was supernaturally inspired. He argues also that the meaning of "canonical" is uncertain. As applied to the books of the Bible, it may signify either regulative books or books which have been ruled and determined by the Church. The Article, he says, wavers between the two senses. The essay contains a strong plea for the recognition of the human element in the Bible, for a wide definition of inspiration, and for the admission of an ideological interpretation of certain parts of Scripture, whose value will thus be found to lie not primarily in the historicity of the facts recorded, but in the ideas which they suggest. In the concluding pages of the essay the author extends the principle of development to a future life. Impressed by "the neutral character of the multitude" to whom neither the promises nor threats of revelation are applicable, and realising what little spiritual growth thousands have made in this earthly life, he contemplates a period of future education, and the existence of "nurseries, as it were, and seed-grounds, where the undeveloped may grow up under new conditions." His final words, which have been rendered famous because they formed one of the articles of charge brought against him in his two ecclesiastical trials, are these:—"And when the Christian Church in all its branches shall have fulfilled its sublunary office, and its Founder shall have surrendered His kingdom to the great Father, all, both small and great, shall find a refuge in the bosom of the Universal Parent, to repose, or to be quickened into higher life, in the ages to come, according to His will."

[1] From a Charge given by Thirlwall in 1863; cp. *Remains Literary and Theological*, vol. ii. pp. 46–7.

Benjamin Jowett's contribution to the volume was an essay, "On the Interpretation of Scripture." He had intended this to appear as one of the dissertations in the second edition of his Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles (1859), but it was too late for insertion in that work, and so found a place here. We have already seen in the last chapter some features of Jowett's handling of the Bible; his freedom from traditional methods of interpretation, his treatment of the Epistles as literature, and his insistence that the Biblical writers should be studied in the light of their historical surroundings. The present essay carries on the same line of teaching. The first object of the interpreter, says Jowett, should be to recover the original meaning of his author, and he shows how it is the neglect of this principle which has led to the existence of a variety of methods of interpretation. Historical sympathy is required in the interpreter who "has to transfer himself to another age; to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul; to disengage himself from all that follows."[1] He must beware of making the theological formulæ of a later age the measure of Scripture's significance. There is need, he says, of a history of interpretation. Such a history would show how the notion of inspiration had narrowed and hardened, how the word "from being used in a general way to express what may be called the prophetic spirit of Scripture, has passed within the last two centuries into a sort of technical term."[2] Only from a study of the Bible itself can we discover the nature of inspiration. No theory of it is tenable which does not conform to our scientific and historical knowledge. He points out how in England the interpretation of Scripture had assumed an apologetic character, and had become, owing to the prevalence of erroneous theories of inspiration, a defence of the Bible against the advances of science and criticism. Study the Bible, he says, as you would study any other book. Face all difficulties frankly. "Doubt comes in at the window, when Inquiry is denied at the door." The whole essay, in a word, is a plea for the free use of critical reason in the study of Scripture, and for the recognition of the dependence of theology upon the growth of new knowledge in all departments of research. Two results are noted as following from the fresh methods of Biblical study. First, "distinctions of theology,

[1] *Essays and Reviews*, p. 408.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

which were in great measure based on old interpretations, are beginning to fade away. A change is observable in the manner in which doctrines are stated and defended; it is no longer held sufficient to rest them on texts of Scripture, one, two, or more, which contain, or appear to contain, similar words or ideas."[1] Secondly, there is a growing reserve on matters of doctrine and controversy which contrasts markedly with the theological activity of twenty years ago.[2] Jowett saw that new visions of truth were opening up before the eyes of his generation. Deep-seated tendencies were at work which were to transform theology. "More things than at first sight appear are moving towards the same end." The theologian "is subject to the conditions of his age rather than one of its moving powers."[3] It is for him to recognise this dependence, and turn it into the means of his own advance.[4]

Another of the essayists was Rowland Williams, vicar of Broad Chalke, Wiltshire, formerly Vice-Principal of, and Professor of Hebrew in, St. David's College, Lampeter. In 1855 he had published a volume of sermons entitled *Rational Godliness*, which are characterised by a spirit of liberal inquiry in the study of the Scriptures. He dwells upon the human element in the Bible, emphasizes the progressive character of revelation and the fact that it is not confined to Israel, and insists that the whole question of the nature of prophecy requires to be reconsidered.[5] The effect, he says, of the current mechanical theories of inspiration is to remove God from the daily experiences of life. The religion of the upholders of such views is not "a leaven fermenting through human nature, nor a living and moulding power, but it is as an image fallen down once for all from Heaven; with no analogy in nature; with no parallel in history; with no affinity among the Gentiles."[6] Inspiration is a matter of degree; a writer may be inspired to teach religious truth, and yet be imperfectly informed on other subjects. With regard to miracles, Williams would have every reputed miracle judged on its own merits and in the light of the circumstances of the particular narrative. The question of the

[1] P. 511. [2] P. 513. [3] P. 513.

[4] Cp. Note I, at the end of this chapter, for some remarks on Jowett as a theologian.

[5] Cp. Sermon, "Servants of God speaking as moved by the Holy Ghost."

[6] Cp. Sermon, "The Spirit and the Letter."

miraculous, he tells us, must never be prejudged as if it vitally affected the foundations of the Christian faith. For that the truest evidence is to be found in the teaching and character of Christ. The casting out of devils he regards as an accommodation on Christ's part to popular Jewish beliefs. Throughout the volume he shows himself ready to accept the conclusions of criticism as to the structure and date of the various books of the Bible. The sermons are vigorous and incisive in style, outspoken in their teaching, and in method constructive rather than destructive.

Williams wrote in *Essays and Reviews* on "Bunsen's Biblical Researches." Baron von Bunsen had been Prussian ambassador in England from 1841 to 1854, had married an English wife, and was well known in English society. A student of wide reading, a man of sound judgment, and an earnest Christian, he stood high in the opinion of those capable of forming an estimate. When such a man was found enthusiastically welcoming the results of Biblical criticism, and at the same time relinquishing none of the essentials of Christianity, all who were not utterly prejudiced must have felt that the new views called for careful consideration. The introduction of his writings to the public helped also to correct the belief which had become prevalent in England, that in Germany a reaction had set in against criticism, and that conservative views were once more in the ascendant.[1] "Bunsen's enduring glory," writes Williams, "is neither to have paltered with his conscience nor shrunk from the difficulties of the problem, but to have brought a vast erudition, in the light of a Christian conscience, to unroll tangled records, tracing frankly the Spirit of God elsewhere, but honouring chiefly the traditions of His Hebrew Sanctuary." [2]

Unlike his earlier volume of sermons, Williams's essay is aggressive in temper. It is less a reasoned argument than a fierce and passionate challenge, as if the author were determined to throw into the orthodox camp a bomb which should not fail to explode. Its main purport is to widen the meaning of revelation. Thirlwall criticised it on the ground that it tended to obliterate the distinction between natural and revealed

[1] Cp. Benn, *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. ii. pp. 120–1.

[2] *Essays and Reviews*, p. 62.

religion, and to throw doubt upon the existence of any revelation differing in kind from the ordinary methods of the divine operation.[1] Williams felt, as keenly as Jowett,[2] the difficulty of maintaining the antithesis between natural and revealed religion, but he does not deny that there has been a perpetual presence of the Spirit in human history, nor that the national life of the Hebrews was so indwelt by God as to form a special channel for the communication of religious truth. What he asks is, that inspiration shall be defined consistently with the facts of Scripture and of human nature. "These would neither exclude the idea of fallibility among Israelites of old, nor teach us to quench the Spirit in true hearts for ever."[3] One phrase in this connection gave great offence, and was made an article of charge against him in the ecclesiastical courts. It is as follows: "If such a Spirit did not dwell in the Church, the Bible would not be inspired, for the Bible is, before all things, the written voice of the congregation."[4] His views on justification were also singled out for attack, and especially the sentence, "Why may not justification by faith have meant peace of mind, or sense of Divine approval, which comes of trust in a righteous God, rather than a fiction of merit by transfer?"[5]

It would be tedious to give any summary of the critical conclusions accepted by Bunsen and his reviewer. What concerns us is the fact that both championed the free use of reason in all matters theological. Williams points out that reliance on authority in opposition to reason is really cowardice and a refusal to face the facts. "The attitude of too many English scholars before the last Monster out of the Deep is that of the degenerate senators before Tiberius. They stand, balancing terror against mutual shame. Even with those in our Universities who no longer repeat fully the required shibboleths, the explicitness of truth is rare. He who assents most, committing himself least to baseness, is reckoned wisest."[6] He handles severely Mansel's Bampton Lectures, saying that the lecturer shows no acquaintance with even the elements of Biblical criticism. "The author is a mere gladiator hitting

[1] Charge, 1863.
[2] Cp. the Dissertation on *Natural and Revealed Religion*.
[3] P. 93. [4] P. 92. [5] P. 95. [6] P. 62.

in the dark, and his blows fall heaviest on what it was his duty to defend."[1] The whole tone of the essay is, as has been said, aggressive. The language is often violent, and the essayist takes no pains to sweeten the draught which he wishes to administer.

Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, wrote an essay on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England 1688–1750," with the object of recalling to men's minds a period of Church history, the study of which had been much neglected. It was a period, he remarks, which "the genuine Anglican" liked to omit from the story of the Church. Since the Oxford Movement eighteenth century theology had been regarded by ecclesiastical historians who were infected with the deadly poison of party-spirit as something to be left severely alone. "We have not yet learned, in this country, to write our ecclesiastical history on any better footing than that of praising up the party, in or out of the Church, to which we happen to belong."[2] Against party-spirit, particularly as exhibited by the Tractarians, Pattison never ceases to inveigh.[3] In this essay he emphasizes the need for recognising the principle of continuity in theology. The whole of the past, he says, has had its influence in forming the present. If theologians and ecclesiastical historians had been less of partisans, and had had a truer sense of historical proportion, we might not have found ourselves to-day threatened by "a godless orthodoxy," and allowed in the Church "only the formulæ of past thinkings." For the theologian the study of history is of supreme importance, because history spells life, movement, progress. It is such study which will prevent theology in the Church of England from becoming, what it is in the Roman Church, "an unmeaning frostwork of dogma, out of all relation to the actual history of man." The essayist points out how English theology has not yet got rid of the stamp of advocacy which it received at the Reformation. "Theological study is still the study of topics of defence."[4] But an advocate in a law-court presents only one side of a case; and that is a

[1] P. 79, note.

[2] P. 308.

[3] Cp. the article "Present State of Theology in Germany" in the *Westminster Review*, 1857, and that on "Learning in the Church of England" in the *National Review*, 1863.

[4] P. 364.

procedure which the theologian should rigorously eschew. "If theological argument forgets the judge and assumes the advocate, or betrays the least bias to one side, the conclusion is valueless, the principle of free inquiry has been violated."[1] Further, as Pattison points out, a study of the theology of the eighteenth century prepares the way for the revision of beliefs in the nineteenth which is so sorely needed. The eighteenth century was engaged in a reconstruction of belief. The appeal to reason which characterised it was the attempt to find a new basis for doctrine. The old basis had given way. Both authority and the principle of the inward light in each man's breast had been discredited, the first by the Reformation and the failure of the Laudian divines to put the national Church in place of the Church universal, the second, because of the divisions and extravagant developments to which it gave rise. An appeal therefore was made to reason, not to the higher philosophical reason, but to the common reason of mankind; and the theological activity of the century showed itself in the first half of the century in demonstrating the reasonableness and credibility of the Christian revelation, in the second half in the study of external evidences. But the result was unsatisfying. If the truths of natural morality were ably vindicated, a most inadequate defence was offered of the supernatural element in Christianity. The nineteenth century may learn from the failure of the eighteenth the need for a new apologetic.[2]

The essay is a model of lucid statement and careful analysis, and remains to-day one of the best summaries of the theological thought of the period under review.[3] It would be unfair to blame its author too severely for not indicating more clearly the principles upon which the reconstruction of theology should proceed; he is concerned only with a limited inquiry. But the fact remains that the essay is throughout somewhat negative in tone. It weighs in the balance, and finds wanting, Church authority, the inward light of the Spirit, and

[1] Pp. 365–6. [2] Pp. 358–9.

[3] Merz, in *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, says of this essay that, making allowance for its size, it did as much as any other writing to fix "in our minds the meaning of the word Thought as the most suitable and comprehensive term to denote the whole of the inner or hidden life and activity of a period or a nation." Vol. i. p. 25, note (2nd ed.).

the common reason; and its concluding sentence warns the student of modern religious literature that his search for the basis on which revelation is supposed to rest will involve him in an investigation which, though it may be highly profitable, will yet prove to be extremely perplexing.

If Baden Powell had lived (he died almost immediately after the publication of *Essays and Reviews*), there can be little doubt that he too would have been prosecuted for heresy on account of his essay "On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity." In 1827 he had been appointed Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford; his scientific attainments were therefore of the first order. For more than twenty years he had been interested in the relation of science to theology, and had written not a little on the subject.[1]

He had concerned himself mainly with a defence of theism, and with enforcing the argument that the orderliness of nature was evidence of the control of a divine mind which must carry conviction to all who would fairly face it. But the fact that nature was an orderly system convinced him of the impossibility of any miraculous occurrence in the physical sphere. Miracle implies a breach in the uniformity of nature's working, and science, whose aim it is to trace out this uniformity, cannot allow that miracles have happened. The object of the essay is to defend this contention, and to show the unsatisfactory character of most of the apologies for miracle. Such apologies, says Baden Powell, really remove the Gospel records of the miraculous from the sphere of history, and so make a scientific criticism of them impossible. They prove, too, that the apologists have never grasped the significance of the scientific conception of the order of nature.[2]

By miracle the essayist means an "arbitrary interposition"; not a phenomenon at present inexplicable, but which we may hope later to explain. The one is wholly different in kind from the other; the one is miracle in the true sense, the other is not miracle at all.[3] As so defined, the advance of scientific

[1] *E.g. Revelation and Science*, *Tradition Unveiled*, "The Study of the Evidences of Natural Theology," in *Oxford Essays*, and *The Order of Nature*. This last, published in 1859, treats of the question of Miracle on much the same lines as the essay in *Essays and Reviews*.

[2] Pp. 130–4.

[3] Pp. 131–2.

knowledge, says Powell, makes it more and more difficult to believe in miracle. He saw how far modern thought had moved away from the position of Paley, who said that we could not conceive of a revelation supported in any other way than by miracles. Between the beginning of the century and 1860 physical science had made immense advances, and its fundamental postulate was that nature was a home of unvarying law. Powell shared to the full in the optimism which inspired the scientific investigator. "The boundaries of nature exist only where our *present* knowledge places them; the discoveries of to-morrow will alter and enlarge them. The inevitable progress of research must, within a longer or shorter period, unravel all that seems most marvellous, and what is at present least understood will become as familiarly known to the science of the future as those points which a few centuries ago were involved in equal obscurity, but are now thoroughly understood."[1]

The essay emphasizes this contention, that the evidential force of miracles is wholly relative to the apprehension of those who study them. "All evidential reasoning is essentially an adaptation to the conditions of mind and thought of the parties addressed, or it fails in its object."[2] An evidential appeal, therefore, which was convincing in the past, may be worthless now, when new knowledge has changed our mental outlook. For the last hundred years miracles have been regarded from the evidential point of view. Apologists have pointed to them as the most convincing proof of the claims of Christianity to be a divine revelation; but now that line of argument is being abandoned. The miracles, if they are accepted at all, are accepted because of the revelation, not the revelation because of the miracles.[3] Christianity, urges Powell, must be viewed altogether apart from its connection with physical things; a sharp separation must be made between the physical and the spiritual.[4] Defenders of the faith must learn to distinguish between the essential and the accidental in their creed, and must be ready to adapt their apologetics to the changing conditions of knowledge.

At the end of the essay the writer summarises his conclusions. There are two ways, he says, in which we may regard

[1] P. 130. [2] P. 140; cp. p. 137. [3] P. 142. [4] P. 152.

an alleged miracle. We may look at it "abstractedly as a physical event," in which case it belongs to the physical order and must be referred to physical causes, thus ceasing to be supernatural. Or we may regard it as connected with religious doctrine, and so invested with a halo of sanctity; or, again, as asserted on the authority of inspiration. But in this case the appeal is to faith alone, and the alleged event is withdrawn from the cognisance of reason. Powell did not deny that many of the recorded miracles were real facts; what he said was that none of those facts were real miracles, but only appeared so to persons who were ignorant of the laws of nature. He is silent in the essay as to the greater miracles of the Christian religion; but it is clear that he refuses to admit miracle anywhere in the material order. His assertion that miracles might be taken on faith in connection with doctrine is a concession to orthodoxy so half-hearted as to be of little value to the apologist. I find it difficult to accept his reasoning when he says that he is ready to allow "the higher claims of divine mysteries in the invisible and spiritual worlds," and argues that these claims are strengthened by a rigid separation between the spheres of the spiritual and the physical. "Advancing knowledge, while it asserts the dominion of science in physical things, confirms that of faith in spiritual; we thus neither impugn the generalisations of philosophy nor allow them to invade the dominion of faith, and admit that what is not a subject for a problem may hold its place in a creed."[1] But can we rest content with a position like this, which is dualistic through and through? There is, first of all, the dualism of faith and reason. Faith is asked to accept what reason rejects. But surely faith cannot long maintain itself if it is in complete opposition to reason. Man is a unity, and cannot be thus divided up into compartments. Next, there is the dualism, which it is strange to find in a writer who had investigated the philosophy of theism, between the physical and the spiritual orders. It is this last dualism which is the root of all Powell's difficulties. Could he have lived till to-day he would have been surprised to find how much advance has been made in the direction of overcoming it. The problem of miracle is still with us, but there is an increasing recognition that for its solution a philosophical investigation is required.

[1] P. 152.

Powell, we feel, has not pressed his inquiry deep enough. Nor, surely, is the reason hard to discover. He was a determinist. Deny human freedom, and, though you may reach the conclusion that God is Mind, it becomes difficult for you to give to the conception of God as Will its full significance. But, metaphysically regarded, the problem of miracle is one which centres round the thought of the divine will. Grant the existence of a personal will as the ground of the universe, and the *possibility* of miracle presents few difficulties. What remains, then, is the historical problem, whether the miracles of Christianity did actually occur. And here two main classes of considerations have to be borne in mind. First, there are those which are concerned with the whole problem of the Person of Christ, His claim, His significance, the categories which are needed to explain Him. Secondly, there are those, emphasized by the essayist, which have to do with the background of culture and belief obtaining at the period to which the alleged miracle belongs. If the first set of considerations tells in favour of miracle, the second, in the light of modern criticism, warns us that we may have to narrow the area of the miraculous. In conclusion, we have to ask whether "what is not a subject for a problem may hold its place in a creed." Have you not voided Christianity of half its significance if you substitute for the historical facts of the religion their spiritual meaning as ideas? In a religion such as Christianity, whose central doctrine is one, not of incarnation in general, but of the incarnation of a single, definite, historical Person, is not the connection of idea with fact vital to the whole scheme? As has been recently pointed out, it is just in the most developed forms of religion that the close connection between doctrine and historical setting is most clearly realised by the believer.[1] To treat the bond as being of little value is to miss the true meaning of the doctrine. In Thirlwall's opinion Powell's essay was the most important in the volume, and we cannot but feel that his judgment was right. It was not merely that the essayist's tone was throughout negative, or that he rode rough-shod over beliefs which it had been the chief work of a century of apologetic labour to defend. The attack went deeper than that. For those who had eyes to see, it involved issues of the profoundest significance both

[1] Cp. *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, by C. C. J. Webb, p. 63.

for religion and philosophy. It called in question the whole character of Christianity as a historical revelation.

A few words will suffice for the two remaining essays of the collection. That by Frederick Temple, Headmaster of Rugby, though it is conceived throughout in a liberal spirit, departed far less than the others from the current standards of orthodoxy. If all the essays had been of this character the volume would have caused no great stir. The title of the essay is "The Education of the World." The writer takes up Lessing's thought of the progressive education of man by the Spirit of God, and pictures humanity as "a colossal man, whose life reaches from the creation to the day of judgment. The successive generations of men are days in this man's life." In this education there are three stages, corresponding to the periods of childhood, youth, and manhood. In the first Rules are the governing power, in the second Example, in the third Principles. When we turn to study revelation we find that it has followed the same course. First came the Law, then the Son of Man, and lastly the gift of the Spirit.

I have said that the essay was less of a departure from orthodoxy than the rest. Thirlwall, however, saw in it a dangerous tendency, and in his Charge in 1863 described it as opening "the broadest room for an assault upon the foundations of historical Christianity," though he was careful not to impute to the author any such destructive intention. The point of his criticism is this. Temple had said that Christ came into the world just when men were fitted to feel the power of His example and presence. Had He come later, in our own age, for instance, when faith has turned inwards and finds it hard to accept any outward manifestations of God's truth, we should, he thinks, have had a difficulty in recognising His divinity. We are obliged, therefore, to summon the Apostles to our aid, and through their eyes see in Christ the image of the Father. Our vision of the Son of God is of necessity mediated through them. Thirlwall asks whether we can expect men living in the third stage, the stage of the supremacy of the Spirit, to accept the verdict and rely on the vision of men of the second stage whose enlightenment was less than their own. Youthful beliefs, the essay teaches, are outgrown as humanity develops. Is the doctrine of the divinity of Christ's Person one of them? The

author, he says, is silent. I confess that I cannot see much force in this criticism, which might be applied with equal justice to any modern apologetic for Christianity. In no case can the living example be recovered by men who live after the period of Christ's earthly life. Criticism has done much to reproduce for thought and imagination the figure of Jesus as He moved among the men of His own time, but it has done so only by making use of the apostolic records of His life. A wise criticism will always give weight to the teaching of the Apostles as to the significance of Christ's Person, because it will recognise that they were nearer to the events and so had good opportunity for judging; but it cannot accept the apostolic verdict without examining its validity for itself. Nor, in this matter, is the advantage entirely on the side of the New Testament writers, for, as the essayist remarks, if the early Christians were more able than we to appreciate the beauty and freshness of the Example, "we know better than they the precise outlines of the truth."[1]

The essay is a plea for a progressive theology which shall welcome criticism and new knowledge. "He is guilty of high treason against the faith, who fears the result of any investigation, whether philosophical, or scientific, or historical."[2] Its author saw that the study of the Bible was the task most incumbent upon the theologians of his day. To clear away the misconceptions which had gathered round it, owing to false theories of inspiration, would serve to bring out in stronger relief its central message.[3] The Bible, he teaches, corresponds in its form to the principles of the divine education of humanity. If it had consisted of precise statements of faith, or minute precepts of conduct, we could never have freed ourselves from a permanent subjection to an outer law. As it is, it makes its appeal to conscience, and we use it "not to over-ride, but to evoke the voice of conscience." The Bible, in fact, is hindered by its form from exercising a despotism over the human spirit; if it could do that, it would become an outer law at once; but its form is so admirably adapted to our need, that it wins from us all the reverence of a supreme authority, and yet imposes on us no yoke of subjection. This it does by virtue of the principle of private judgment, which

[1] Pp. 29, 30. [2] P. 56. [3] P. 57.

puts conscience between us and the Bible, making conscience the supreme interpreter, whom it may be a duty to enlighten, but whom it can never be a duty to disobey."[1] Temple's opponents at once found fault with this statement. The essayist, they said, throws over the authority of the Bible and the authority of the Church, and leaves us nothing but the authority of the inner light in each man's heart. The attack was unfair, for the spiritual as opposed to the verbal authority of the Bible is fully recognised in the essay. Temple's object was to preserve for the Bible its supreme position, but he saw that this could only be done if theology was ready to extend to criticism a friendly hand.

The one layman of the group was a Cambridge man, C. W. Goodwin, who wrote an essay "On the Mosaic Cosmogony." He wished to show that the accounts of creation in Genesis could not be reconciled with the discoveries of modern science, and that the various theories of the harmonists not only did violence to the plain meaning of the narrative, but also contradicted each other. He bids theologians remember that they should look to the Bible for a revelation of religious, and not of scientific truth. "It would have been well if theologians had made up their minds to accept frankly the principle that those things for the discovery of which man has faculties specially provided are not fit objects of a divine revelation."[2] The last words of the essay describe these early Biblical narratives as being "not an authentic utterance of Divine knowledge, but a human utterance, which it has pleased Providence to use in a special way for the education of mankind." To the truth of this statement most would be ready to subscribe to-day, but many would feel that the words fail to do justice to the sublime religious teaching which underlies the records and compels us to call the writer of them inspired. They afford another example of the negative tone which, as we have seen, characterises the volume.

As we look back on the book, after an interval of half a century, what verdict are we to pass upon it as a whole? The authors might have demurred at its being treated as a whole, for in an introductory note they state that each is reponsible only for his own article. But, as contemporary opinion felt,

[1] Pp. 53, 54. [2] Pp. 251-2.

joint production of necessity implied some measure of corporate responsibility. In addition, there are certain common features impressed upon the various essays, though Temple's contribution is less open than the rest to the criticisms which follow. I have spoken of the negative spirit of the volume. That is the first thing about it which must strike the reader. It is destructive rather than constructive. It contains materials for the reconstruction of theology, which its authors saw was a pressing need of the time, but it does little in the way of showing how they should be used. A world of difference separates it in this respect from the later, famous Oxford volume, *Lux Mundi*. The latter is throughout constructive. Its authors were a body of men who possessed a set of definite theological beliefs, who were firm in their loyalty to the historic creeds of the Church, and wrote with the set purpose of showing that the new knowledge which had come to their generation could be combined with all that was essential in the old faith. The writers of *Essays and Reviews* lacked a clearly defined dogmatic basis, and the lack shows itself on almost every page of the book. It would be interesting to discuss the differences between the Broad Churchman of to-day and the Broad Churchman of 1860, for the contrast is marked. Two points, I think, stand out clearly. The modern Broad Churchman has a keener historical sense, a truer appreciation of the value of historical facts, and in particular of the central facts of the Christian revelation. He comes to his theology through a study of history, and the latter has taught him two things; first, that a core of solid fact lies at the heart of each dogma of his religion; secondly, that, if this core of fact be taken away, the dogma loses most of its significance. I question if the essayists of 1860 had this feeling for a concrete fact. They were enamoured of ideology, and tended to treat Christianity as a system of ideas. Their landscape is wrapped in a mellow haze, and the plain man finds the path difficult to discover. Again, the modern Broad Churchman makes the Person of Christ the central figure in his system. If the study of comparative religion has brought to light the similarities between Christianity and other faiths, it has also emphasized the features in which they are unlike. And here the most striking dissimilarity between them lies in the character of the Founder of

Christianity and the place which He occupies in His system. *Essays and Reviews* contains no article on the Person of Christ. But in any volume professing to offer suggestions for the reconstruction of theology one would naturally look, first of all, for a chapter which should define the position to be given to Him from whom Christianity took its origin. Bishop Wilberforce, in his attack on this book in the *Quarterly Review*,[1] spoke of it as leaving us in a "dreary vagueness of pantheistic pietism." This is too severe a criticism; but one cannot but feel that the dogmatic outlines of the volume would have been clearer if the authors had begun at the centre of Christianity and constructed a Christology. It is probably true that the Broad Churchmen of the middle of last century were somewhat too content, in their dogmatic uncertainty, to present Christianity as an ethical system. But Christian ethics cannot be divorced from their religious basis, and any examination of this basis opens up at once the whole range of Christological and other dogmatic problems. The "return to Christ" which has characterised the advance of modern theology means much more than the attempt to reconstruct the historical figure of Jesus, and the conditions under which He lived. It involves the investigation of His consciousness and His claim. It leads us right into the very heart of a serious, dogmatic inquiry.

Essays and Reviews, then, lacks our modern feeling for history, undervalues the importance of dogma, and is too negative in tone. In addition, the temper of some of the essays, notably that by Williams, is distinctly aggressive. I do not say that the shock was not needed. But the book would have better commended itself to a conservative religious public if its utterances had been less charged with dynamite.

On the other hand, many things may be said in its favour. The progress of thought has proved the soundness of its general attitude in matters of Biblical criticism. Its authors were right in their diagnosis of the theological situation. Advance was blocked by the presence of false theories of inspiration. There could be no hope of arresting the growing severance between theology and the newer ways of thinking, until this question of the nature of the authority of the Bible, and of the inspiration of its writers, had been settled. The book, again,

[1] January, 1861.

did useful work in calling attention to the need of historical and comparative methods of study. It thus prepared the way for the rise of the true historical spirit, which, as we have seen, its authors themselves lacked. And it was a courageous book, even though at times somewhat ill-mannered. It emphasized the rights of the critical reason in the theological sphere, bade men cease to be intellectual cowards, and held up the ideal of a progressive theology which should recognise the sacredness of all truth, and keep itself living by drawing freely upon the accumulated stores of secular knowledge.

What gave to it its main importance was that it was published at a highly opportune moment. For the past thirty or forty years critical methods in England had been gathering force. There had been a consilience of tendencies, all making in the direction of broader theological views. In this volume they came to a head, and found a vigorous and popular expression in the writings of men, many of whom were admittedly among the intellectual leaders of the day. Behind the volume, then, lay the growing forces of progress. On the other hand, its issue coincided with a strong movement of attack on Christianity. The writings of Strauss were being read; the philosophy of Mill was in fashion; a wave of negation, as we have seen, had been sweeping over the country after the Oxford Movement collapsed. And in the year before Darwin had published the *Origin of Species*, which in the popular estimate was supposed to teach a creed of materialism, and to destroy the argument from design which theology had long considered to afford one of the clearest proofs of the existence and wisdom of God. Opponents of the volume at once pointed to its negations, and ranked it with these anti-Christian productions. Every circumstance, then, helped to add importance to the book. In any estimate of it we must always give due weight to the general intellectual conditions under which it appeared.

Public attention was directed to the essays by an article in the *Westminster Review* from the pen of Frederic Harrison, entitled "Neo-Christianity," in which he triumphantly catalogued all their unorthodoxies, and expressed his delight that the views for which the Positivists had been contending were now officially proclaimed by leading churchmen.[1] Men began to grow alarmed,

[1] There can, I think, be no question that this article first alarmed public opinion about the book.

and the tide of denunciation rose. Into the long controversy which followed we need not enter; but a brief mention may be made of the two most important books which were issued in answer to the volume. These were *Replies to Essays and Reviews*, in 1862, with a preface by Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford; and, in the same year, *Aids to Faith*, with a preface by Thomson, Bishop of Gloucester. The latter is by far the abler production, and is written in a calm and reasonable spirit. Wilberforce's preface to *Replies* deserves notice, if for no other reason than because in it he frankly confesses that he has never read the essays, which he then proceeds to denounce in violent and intemperate language. He was the protagonist of the bishops in their condemnation of the book. He attacked the essayists, as we have seen, in the *Quarterly Review*, preached two sermons against them before the University, and finally induced the episcopal bench collectively to censure the volume. It would have redounded more to his credit had he adopted his own recommendation for dealing with the crisis, and issued a "calm, comprehensive, scholar-like declaration of positive truth upon all the matters in dispute." The *Replies* was a lame defence of the orthodox position. The best article in it is that by C. A. Heurtley, Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Heurtley defends miracle in answer to Baden Powell. He points out that the problem cannot be decided in the laboratory alone. It is not merely a question of miracle on one side, and the order of nature on the other. We have, rather, to consider the whole purport of the Incarnation and the nature of Christ's Person. Miracle may be viewed, he reminds us, not simply as a violation of a law of nature, but as a suspension of a law by a power acting for higher moral ends.

In *Aids to Faith* the two best essays are "Inspiration," by Harold Browne, Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and "On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity," by W. Fitzgerald, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross. Harold Browne, while stoutly defending the predictive element in prophecy, and treating our Lord's use of Scripture as proof of the historical character of the events to which He refers, and as determining questions of authorship, takes a more liberal view of the meaning of inspiration, and accepts some of the results of criticism; for example, a late date for Daniel, and the existence of the

deutero-Isaiah. The contrast is great between this essay and the shallow, denunciatory essay by Wordsworth "On the Interpretation of Scripture" in the sister volume.

Fitzgerald's essay is a plea for the historical study of Christianity, and a defence of the apologetics of external evidences. He traces out the movement of thought during the past century, and shows how historical study had been checked; abroad, because of the speculative tendencies of German thought, in England, because, owing to the influence of the Methodist revival, the preacher's main object had been to arouse a pious feeling in the mind of his hearer. Scripture was wrested to support the doctrine dear to the preacher, and a few leading ideas were made the essence of the Gospel. Tractarianism, he says, did nothing to revive the study of Christian evidences. Its appeal was to authority, or to the opportunity which the system of Church life gave for the cultivation of religious taste and feeling. Only through a historical criticism could the historicity of the Christian revelation be vindicated.

It is difficult for us to-day to put ourselves back into the position of these defenders of the faith. Past heterodoxy has become present orthodoxy. But it is strange that none of the writers of these two volumes appreciated the force of the new intellectual movements which were so soon to revolutionise theology. Perhaps strangest of all is the insistence by many of them on the literal truth of all the scriptural narratives, and their inability to see that there was a human element in the Bible,[1] or to distinguish between the essential and the accidental in the system which they wished to defend. Their blindly conservative attitude shows how English theology had for years been standing aloof from all the larger movements of thought in the world outside.

Indignation at the essayists gradually increased, and led finally to the prosecution of Wilson and Williams in the Court of Arches. Judgment was delivered by Dr. Lushington, the Dean of Arches, on December 15, 1862. The two writers were condemned, but appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, who reversed the decision of the lower court. The articles of charge against Wilson, upon which the Com-

[1] Cp., for example, Wordsworth's and Burgon's essays in *Replies*, and M'Caul's and Rawlinson's in *Aids*.

mittee pronounced, were (1) that he did "advisedly declare and affirm in effect, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not written under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that they were not necessarily at all, and certainly not in parts, the word of God"; (2) that he "did advisedly declare and affirm in effect, that after this life and at the end of the existing order of things on this earth, there will be no judgment of God, awarding to those men, whom He shall then approve, everlasting life or eternal happiness, and to those men, whom He shall then condemn, everlasting death or eternal misery."

Williams was charged with affirming (1) "that the Bible or Holy Scripture is an expression of devout reason, and the written voice of the congregation, not the Word of God, nor containing any special revelation of His truth, or of His dealings with mankind, nor the rule of our faith"; and (2) "that justification by faith means only the peace of mind, or sense of Divine approval, which comes of trust in a righteous God, and that justification is a verdict of forgiveness upon our repentance, and of acceptance upon the offering of our hearts."

All these statements were held to contradict the teaching of the XXXIX Articles, or of the Liturgy of the Church of England.

The Committee decided with regard to the charges relating to inspiration that neither essayist had said anything which contradicted statements in the formularies of the Church. The word "inspiration," they pointed out, was not applied by the framers of the Articles to Holy Scripture, nor did they make any attempt to define the meaning or the limits of the term. "The caution of the framers of our Articles forbids our treating their language as implying more than is expressed; nor are we warranted in ascribing to them conclusions expressed in new forms of words involving minute and subtle matters of controversy."

As to Wilson's views on eternal punishment the Court found that the expression of a hope that the punishment of the wicked might not be endless contradicted no positive teaching of the Church. The charge against Williams relating to justification failed, because the Court found that Article XI, which it was asserted was contradicted, "is wholly silent as

to the merits of Jesus Christ being transferred to us. It asserts only that we are justified for the merits of our Saviour by faith, and by faith alone. We cannot therefore say that it is penal in a clergyman to speak of merit by transfer as a fiction, however unseemly the word may be when used in connection with such a subject."

The Committee accepted the rules which had been laid down for the guidance of the Court in the Gorham Judgment, and in addition asserted the following principles:—(*a*) "On matters on which the Church has prescribed no rule, there is so far freedom of opinion that they may be discussed without penal consequences. Nor in a proceeding like the present are we at liberty to ascribe to the Church any rule or teaching which we do not find expressly and distinctly stated, or which is not plainly involved in or to be collected from that which is written." (*b*) "That only is matter of accusation which is *advisedly* taught or maintained by a clergyman in opposition to the doctrine of the Church. The writer cannot in a proceeding such as the present be held responsible for more than the conclusions which are directly involved in the assertion he has made."[1]

The members of the Judicial Committee present at the hearing were Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomson, Archbishop of York, the Lord Chancellor, Tait, Bishop of London, and Lords Cranworth, Chelmsford, and Kingsdown. The two Archbishops dissented from the judgment of the Court which related to the question of inspiration, though Tait agreed with the majority. It was the lay rather than the ecclesiastical mind which preserved intellectual liberty for the Church.

NOTE I

Jowett was the most distinguished figure among the essayists, and it may be well to say something more about his theology as a whole. I have already remarked that the essay on "The Imputation of the Sin of Adam" shows that he knew how to construct as well as to destroy. Destruction, indeed, was never his ultimate object. The

[1] Cp. Brodrick and Fremantle, *A Collection of the Judgments of the Judicial Committee in Ecclesiastical Cases relating to Doctrine and Discipline*, from which all the quotations above are taken.

task which he had set himself was to free Christianity from such theological accretions as modern knowledge showed to be untenable, and to present it in a form which thoughtful minds in his own day could accept. He was essentially a critic, but he criticised with a view to reconstruction. And yet it remains true that his general attitude is too negative, and that he fails adequately to appreciate the elements of permanent value in the traditional theology. In the essay on "Atonement and Satisfaction," for example, he shows, as Moberly points out,[1] a strange inability to perceive that the phraseology of sacrifice and satisfaction which he is opposing is capable of a meaning very different from that which he attributes to it; a meaning which, if it is accepted, makes the language no longer open to his criticisms. The result is that, instead of reinterpreting the current formulas, he rejects them altogether. He was right in attacking theories of the Atonement which demoralised it, and treated it as merely substitutionary or transactional; and he did good service in insisting that dogmas divorced from moral experience, and blindly held, without any attempt to give them a rational content, were to be rejected. But he is certainly unfair to the traditional theology when he writes: "On the other hand, it is instructive to observe that there has always been an under-current in theology, the course of which has turned towards morality, and not away from it."[2] Just as if the metaphysical activity of theologians had not always been exercised in an ethical interest, as if the Church of the past had forgotten her duty as a preacher of righteousness! It is one thing to say that theology has at times over-defined; it is quite another to charge theologians with being nothing more than logicians.

This failure to appreciate the worth of past theology is seen, again, in his treatment of the Old Testament. In the essay on "The Old Testament," while he does recognise the continuity between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, and speaks of these as the double record of the increasing revelation of God, he ends with the following words: "It is not natural, nor perhaps possible, to us to cease to use the figures in which 'holy men of old' spoke of that which belonged to their peace. But it is well that we should sometimes remind ourselves, that 'all these things are a shadow, but the body is of Christ.'"[3] We feel that he is hardly doing justice to the permanent value of the Hebrew Scriptures, or to Christ's own words that He came "not to destroy, but to fulfil." Is not the explanation of his

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 386–7.
[2] *Essays and Dissertations*, p. 341.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

attitude that, in common with most of the Broad Churchmen of his day, he lacked the true, historical sense? If he had understood what the continuity of historical development means, could he have pressed, as he does, the antithesis between the teaching of the Evangelists and that of St. Paul? He shows everywhere a tendency to reject theology, and to return to what he conceives to be the simplicity of Christ's teaching. There is always need for such a critical return to the sources, that we may have a standard by which we may estimate the course of the development; but are the sources so simple as Jowett appears to think them? Do not Gospels, Epistles, Creeds hang together as one whole? The deeper study of history which characterises the present generation has enabled us to appreciate more clearly how close and living is the bond which knits together the stages of theological development.

In the story of English theology Jowett's truest title to fame is his championship of liberty of thought. To strike off the fetters, to help men to face facts and to see the truth, to preserve freedom of opinion and speech within the Church—it was for this he fought, and fought not in vain.

APPENDIX

THEOLOGY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Of the development of theology outside the Church of England in this period not much more remains to be said. We have already discussed the work and influence of Alexander Geddes, Erskine, Carlyle, McLeod Campbell, Cardinal Newman, and of that small band of Unitarians, Hennell, Bray, Greg, who wrote during the years of doubt and negation in the middle of the century. Only one name of first-rate importance is left, that of James Martineau. Though the period of his widest influence was not till after 1860, I have thought it well to say something here about his earlier activities, because in his mental development we can trace clearly a reflection of the changes which were coming over theological thought generally. The greater part of this Appendix is concerned with him, and with the transformation of Unitarianism which he effected.

We are not, I think, called on to discuss the Roman Catholic controversy at the beginning of the century, which arose out of a Charge delivered in 1806 by Bishop Barrington, who accused Romanists of being idolaters. John Lingard and Dr. John Milner were the chief writers on the Roman side; Bishop Burgess, and Phillpotts, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, on the Anglican.[1] The controversy was of importance at the time owing to the agitation in favour of the emancipation of Roman Catholics, but it has little interest for us to-day.

Turning to Protestant Nonconformist Churches, I cannot find that the Baptists made any important contribution to theological thought in this period. They had their own domestic controversies, some of which involved doctrinal questions of great interest to members of the Baptist communion; but their main activities were of the practical order. They did much for the cause of foreign missions, and in Robert Hall produced a striking preacher. They were also in the van of the movement in favour of political and social reform.[2]

[1] Lingard wrote *Remarks* on the Charge. Milner, in *The End of Religious Controversy*, gave a general answer to the Protestant attack on Rome. Burgess wrote a book called the *Protestant Catechism*.

[2] Cp. Stoughton's *History of Religion in England*, vol. vii. p. 284.

Among the Independents in the early years of the century one name deserves a brief mention. Dr. John Pye Smith was tutor at Homerton College. He had a considerable knowledge of geology, and defended the new discoveries of the science against those who were inclined to reject them on the ground that they conflicted with the account of creation in Genesis. He delivered the Congregational Lecture in 1839, in which he sought to reconcile the Bible with science, pointing out that science is a revelation from God, and that theologians have made a mistake in assuming that Genesis teaches that the age of the earth is less than six thousand years.[1] He seems also to have doubted at one time whether the Song of Solomon was canonical. He was a good Hebrew and Greek scholar, and was acquainted with the writings of German Biblical commentators. But his familiarity with critical methods did not take him far in a liberal direction. He can in no sense be called a herald of the newer ways of thinking.[2]

The Free Churches shared in the general revival of religious life and activity which took place in the third decade of the century; and this was notably the case with the Independents. We find them about this time adopting the name Congregationalists, on the ground that the name Independents tended to foster unduly a spirit of congregational individualism. In 1831 and the following year the Congregational Union came into existence, a Congregational Library was founded, and an annual lecture in theology was instituted, the first lecturer being Dr. Wardlaw, who took as his subject "Christian Ethics." I question if many of these lectures are read to-day; but the same is true of the Bampton Lectures of the period.[3]

The Baptists and Congregationalists were conservative and tenacious of their inherited theological beliefs. The same cannot be said of the Presbyterians in England, whose story in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth is one of movement away from orthodoxy to Unitarianism. It was their boast that they were an intellectual party who tolerated variety of religious opinions; and we find them in 1800 divided into two main schools, with leanings toward Arianism or Socinianism. Members of these schools, however, differed widely among themselves in their beliefs. Where so much diversity of opinion obtained and the dogmatic tie was weak, it is not surprising that there should have been a general drift in the direction of Unitarianism. Thomas Belsham (d. 1828), who had seceded from the Independents, founded the

[1] Cp. Hunt's *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 82–3.

[2] Cp. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

[3] For a short summary of the Congregational Lectures, cp. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, vol. vii. pp. 130–3; and vol. viii. pp. 282–6.

Unitarian Society in 1791, and at the opening of the century was the leader of the group. But with the foundation of the Society a new epoch began. For Belsham was not prepared to allow that all anti-Trinitarians were members of one Church, whatever their precise shade of opinion might be as to the Person of Christ. He adopted a more exclusive attitude, and definitely separated himself from the older group of Arians, insisting that all who joined the new Unitarian Society should profess belief in the simple humanity of Jesus. The *Inquirer* was started as the literary organ of the Society.[1]

These early years, when the influence of Priestley and Belsham was supreme, represent the first stage in Unitarian theology. A brief summary of its leading principles at this time will enable us to understand more clearly the immense transformation wrought by Martineau. The unity of God was, of course, the fundamental doctrine. Along with this went a belief in necessity and the denial of human freedom. The paramount authority of Scripture was another cardinal article of faith. Unitarianism, it was argued, was true, because it was the doctrine of the New Testament. These older Unitarians would have become Trinitarians if they could have satisfied themselves that the doctrine of the Trinity was in the Bible.[2] Their view of inspiration did not differ from that current in orthodox circles. Thus we find Belsham maintaining in a sermon on Creation that Genesis cannot be inspired because it is a compilation of ancient documents which in places contradict each other. Finally, they followed Paley in their apologetics, and sought to prove the truth of Christianity by an appeal to external evidences. Belsham in 1807 published *A Summary View of the Evidences and Practical Importance of the Christian Revelation.* In this the customary arguments from miracle and prophecy play a great part. He is prepared, on the strength of the historical testimony in their favour, to accept the Resurrection and miracles of Christ.[3]

In this older school of Unitarianism Martineau served his intellectual apprenticeship. Reviewing at a later date, in one of his sermons,[4] the development of Unitarian thought, he divided its history into three stages. The first was an epoch of intellectualism in religion, when the influence of Priestley was supreme, and there was a general acceptance of the doctrine of universal necessity. The

[1] Cp. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, vol. vii. pp. 216–18.

[2] Cp. for an account of the older Unitarian theology, J. Estlin Carpenter's *James Martineau*, ch. iv. section 3.

[3] Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–9.

[4] Preached in 1869.

second stage was marked by a reaction heralded by Channing, who preached the gospel of human freedom, and emphasized the claims of conscience. The ethical life of man here stood out in sharp contrast with the iron necessities of external nature. The third stage represents the religion of the spirit. In the creation of it Martineau himself was the chief influence; and in creating it he entirely transformed, as we shall see, the traditional Unitarian theology.

In the Preface to his *Types of Ethical Theory* he gives us a brief sketch of his own mental growth.[1] He tells us how he began his study of philosophy with nothing but the equipment of scientific knowledge which he had acquired in his profession as an engineer, and so was led naturally to interpret man in terms of the external world. "Steeped in the 'empirical' and 'necessarian' mode of thought, I served out successive terms of willing captivity to Locke and Hartley, to Collins, Edwards, and Priestley, to Bentham and James Mill."[2] This phase of his thought lasted till 1834. Then a change is seen, the first traces of which are discernible in a review which he wrote of Bentham's *Deontology*.[3] He begins to break with utilitarianism, emphasizes the importance of motive rather than consequence in moral action, and lays the foundations of his future doctrine of conscience. What brought about this alteration of mental habit, similar, as we remember, to that experienced by Coleridge? It was the fruit, not of book-study, but of reflection upon his own inner life. "It was the irresistible pleading of the moral consciousness which first drove me to rebel against the limits of the merely scientific conception. . . . This involved a surrender of determinism, and a revision of the doctrine of causation."[4] The poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge helped him to a more spiritual view of the universe, but the chief agent in the transformation of his outlook was his ethical experience. From this point onwards we can trace a steady progress along the path just entered. His intellectual energies are devoted to elucidating the significance of the two fundamental conceptions of Will and Conscience. Will becomes for him the supreme type of causality, both in man and God. The inner life of personality is once and for all withdrawn from the network of cause and effect which holds external nature together. It is the home of freedom; and the proof of this lies in the deepest intuitions of the soul. Similarly, causation in nature must be

[1] Cp. pp. viii–xiv.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. ix.
[3] Cp. Carpenter's *James Martineau*, p. 148.
[4] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Preface, pp. xii and xiii.

referred to the divine will as its ground. The scientific conception of force he regards as an abstraction. Force is "will *minus* purpose" and as such is non-existent. His doctrine of conscience has many notes of originality, and will probably always find a place in future histories of ethics. It reflects his inner moral earnestness, and is the transcript of a living ethical experience. In every ethical judgment he finds a preference; there is always a higher and a lower present. The function of conscience is to decide among the competing springs of action. Its office is judicial, but its standard of judgment is the purely ethical standard of higher and lower worth, and is not to be confused with any prudential estimate of consequences. "Conscience, on the other hand" (the contrast is with prudence), "is concerned with quite another order of differences; differences of inherent excellence and authority, which by their very nature must be cognisable *prior* to action, and accordingly not learned by experiment, but read off by *insight*, presenting themselves to consciousness as premonitions, not as the sequel of conduct."[1] In other words, the various impulses of human nature can be arranged according to a scale of moral worth, and conscience decides between the competitors. Action is right if the higher impulse is followed and the lower is rejected; it is wrong if a reverse decision is made. Martineau, like Butler, hears in conscience the tones of the divine voice. Conscience reveals God. Its judgments are authoritative. It evokes our reverence just because it carries with it evidence that it is of heavenly origin. It is the dwelling-place of God in man. Between man and God there is living communion, and a free interchange of spiritual life. Upon the human spirit God acts directly and immediately.[2]

Martineau's ethical theism did not receive its maturest expression till after 1880, when his *Types of Ethical Theory* and *Study of Religion* were published,[3] but its leading principles were established before 1850. What came after was a strengthening of positions already attained. A period of study in Germany in 1848–9 resulted in what he describes as "a new intellectual birth." While there he devoted himself mainly to Greek philosophy, and he returned home feeling that he was now able to place his ethical convictions on a secure metaphysical basis. In the decade which followed we find him

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 186 (3rd ed.).

[2] For a summary of this stage of his development, cp. Carpenter, *op. cit.*, ch. ix.

[3] The *Types* came out in 1885, the *Study* in 1887.

writing a series of essays for the *Prospective Review*,[1] all of which are concerned with epistemological and ontological problems. The breach with empiricism is complete. He is trying to establish the validity of our profoundest metaphysical conceptions.[2] Like Coleridge, he is seeking to find a sure pathway in that dim region where human and divine meet. The spiritual significance of personality is his guide throughout his quest. The causal activity of will and the clear intuitions of our moral being are the ladder by which he scales the metaphysical heights.

In barest outline this is the story of his philosophical growth. We turn now to see how theology fared at his hands. Here the record is one of the abandonment of the official Unitarianism in which he had been brought up. The determinism of Priestley is discarded, partly, as he tells us, through the influence of Channing, but more because his moral nature imperiously asserted itself. And with the abandonment of determinism came a change in his conception of religion. His old intellectualism disappears, feeling and emotion come to their own; and will rather than reason is claimed as the basal element in personality. The result is a transformation in his view of revelation, and of the seat of authority in the Christian system. Personality is the highest thing we know, and if, as Martineau insisted, God speaks in conscience and dwells within the sanctuary of the human heart, will not the truest revelation of God be found in human nature? The traditional view of revelation regarded it as the communication of truth from without. God sent His special messengers to unfold to men His will. The Bible contains the record of that revelation. Its veracity is attested by miracles and prophecy, and by the known character of the messengers. What they reported we have to believe. Revelation consists of a body of objective truth emanating from an external, authoritative source. But such a theory can no longer satisfy Martineau. The divine message is to be read within the soul of man. It is by a study of his own nature in its highest manifestations that man will rise to an understanding of the character and purposes of God.

We have seen how the older Unitarianism was based upon the authority of Scripture and upon a belief that in the Gospels we have the reports of eye-witnesses. This position Martineau was gradually forced to abandon. In the first place, the whole tendency of his

[1] In 1845 the *Christian Teacher* became the *Prospective Review*, and was edited jointly by Martineau, Tayler, Thom, and Wicksteed. Some of Martineau's best work was done in the form of essays for this journal.

[2] Cp. Carpenter, *op. cit.*, ch. xii. section ii.

thought was in the direction of substituting for outward authority the inner witness of the heart. In one of his earliest books, *The Rationale of Religious Inquiry*,[1] he sounds the note of rebellion against the traditional view, maintaining that reason has a right to criticise revelation, and that the authority of Scripture cannot override its judgments. In the second place, his critical and historical studies had convinced him by 1850 of the general truth of the conclusions reached by the Tübingen school. This meant that he was ready to admit the presence in the Gospels of unhistorical matter, and also the existence in primitive Christianity of divergent tendencies of belief. Consequently, he could no longer acquiesce in the traditional opinion that Unitarianism was the undoubted doctrine of the Gospel.[2] But he lost an old faith only to find a new one which was richer. The Person of Jesus Christ stood out for him all the more clearly as the highest revelation in humanity of the character of God. God had not left Himself without witness in any human heart, but the witness was plainest in Jesus; and to interpret Him to men was the supreme duty of the Christian teacher.

Martineau's own development reflects the changes which were coming over the religious thought of the age. Indeed, he set himself to interpret to others the significance of the new movements, and, so far as might be, to direct their course. In an interesting letter to Channing, in the summer of 1840,[3] he analyses some of these changes. He points out how "there is a simultaneous increase, in the very same class of minds, of theological doubt and of devotional affection; there is far less *belief*, yet far more *faith*, than there was twenty years ago." Such a situation, he insists, cannot be met by a more vigorous assertion of the traditional dogmatic position. It calls for a fresh formulation of the bases of belief. Little help, he feels, is to be obtained from minds of the type of Charles Hennell; "their faith is . . . rather in the religiousness of man than in the reality of God." Nor can Christianity be vindicated by the method of external evidences. That has been tested by modern criticism, and has been found wanting. What is needed is a new apology, based upon that "profounder sense of the intrinsically divine character of Christianity" which has arisen in the minds of the younger generation. To create this apology, Martineau, as we have seen, devoted all his energies. His work is everywhere his own, stamped with the quality of individuality. He is not to be hastily classed with anyone else. Yet he

[1] Given as six lectures in 1835, and published in the following year.

[2] This is brought out by Carpenter, *op. cit.*, ch. xi. section 1.

[3] Quoted by Carpenter, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–8.

has broad affinities with Coleridge, Hare, Maurice, and Erskine. All are in revolt against empiricism; all are exponents of a more spiritual philosophy; all emphasize the importance in religion of the inner witness of the heart; all are eager to reinterpret a traditional creed to meet the needs of a changing time.

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Most of the books in the following list have been mentioned already either in the main text or in the footnotes of this volume; but for the convenience of any who may wish to study the period, I have brought them together in this appendix. I have arranged the bibliography according to the subject-matter of the various chapters. The list makes no pretensions to be exhaustive. I have merely put down the books which I have found most useful. Except in a few instances, I have not included in this bibliography the various magazine articles or articles in the *Encylopaedia Britannica* which I have studied. Nor have I thought it necessary to enumerate the writings of the philosophers from Descartes onwards which I have consulted. There are many excellent histories of philosophy, *e.g.* Windelband's, which will give the student all the information he may require. The reference to a biography under a particular chapter does not of course imply that the volume is not useful for other chapters. In the books which give a general survey of the period will be found sections dealing with each special movement; but, with one or two exceptions, I have not included these sections in the bibliography of the various chapters, as I wished to avoid repetition as far as possible.

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[1] This book contains an immense amount of material. Particularly valuable is the summary of the various Bampton Lectures in the century.

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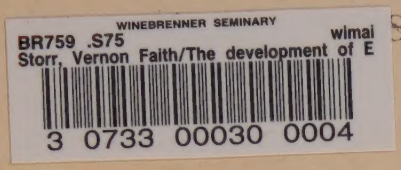

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